CALIFORNIA THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
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SERMONS

ON

SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

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IN SIX VOLUMES.

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SERMON XCVIII.

On Obedience to Parents.

Colossians iii. 20.

Children obey your Parents in all Things.

1. IT has been a ſubject of controverſy for many years, Whether there are any innate principles in the mind of man? But it is allowed on all hands, if there be any practical principles naturally implanted in the ſoul, That "we ought to honour our Parents" will claim this character almoſt before any other. It is enumerated amongſt thoſe univerſal principles by the moſt ancient Authors, and it is undoubtedly found even among moſt ſavages, in the moſt barbarous nations. We may trace it through all the extent of *Europe* and *Aſia*, through the wilds of *Africa*, and the foreſts of *America*. And it is not leſs, but more obſervable in the moſt civilized nations.

So it was, firſt in the Eaſtern parts of the world, which were for ſo many ages, the ſeat of empire, of learning and politeneſs, as well as of religion. So it was afterwards, in all the Grecian States, and throughout the whole Roman Empire. In this reſpect it is plain, they that *have not the* written *law, are a law* unto themſelves; ſhewing *the work* (the ſubſtance) *of the law*, to be *written in their hearts.*

2. And wherever God has revealed his will to man, this law has been a part of that Revelation. It has been herein opened afreſh, conſiderably enlarged, and enforced in the ſtrongeſt manner. In the Jewiſh Revelation, the notorious breakers thereof were puniſhable with death. And this was one of the laws which our bleſſed Lord did not come to deſtroy, but to fulfil. Accordingly he ſeverely reproved the Scribes and Phariſees, for making it void through their traditions; clearly ſhewing that the obligation thereof extended to all ages. It is the ſubſtance of this which St. *Paul* delivers *to the Epheſians* (chap. vi. ver. 1.) "Children obey your Parents in the Lord:" and again in thoſe words to the *Coloſſians*, "Children, obey your parents in all things."

3. It is obſervable, that the Apoſtle enforces this duty by a three-fold encouragement: Firſt, to the *Epheſians* he adds, *For this is right:* it is an inſtance of juſtice as well as mercy. It is no more than their due: it is what we owe to them, for the very being which we have received from them. Secondly, "This is acceptable to the Lord;" it is peculiarly pleaſing to the great Father of men and angels, that we ſhould pay honour and obedience to the Fathers of our fleſh. Thirdly, It is "the firſt commandment with promiſe;"

promise;" the first to the performance whereof a peculiar promise is annexed, "that it may be well with thee, and that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." This promise has been generally understood, to include health and temporal blessings as well as long life. And we have seen innumerable proofs that it belongs to the Christian as well as the Jewish dispensation: many remarkable instances of its accomplishment occur even at this day.

But what is the meaning of these words, "Children obey your parents in all things." I will endeavour by the assistance of God, first to explain, and then to apply them.

I. 1. First, I will endeavour to explain these words; and the rather, because so few people seem to understand them. Look round into the world, not the heathen, but the Christian world, nay, the reformed part of it. Look among those that have the scriptures in their own tongue: and who is there that appears even to have heard of this? Here and there a child obeys the parent out of fear, or perhaps out of natural affection. But how many children can you find that obey their fathers and mothers, out of a sense of duty to God? And how many parents can you find, that duly inculcate this duty upon their children? I doubt a vast majority both of parents and children are totally ignorant of the whole affair. For the sake of these, I will make it as plain as I can; but still I am thoroughly sensible, those that are not willing to be convinced, will no more understand what I say, than if I was talking Greek or Hebrew.

2. You will eaſily obſerve, that by *parents* the Apoſtle means both fathers and mothers, as he refers us to the fifth commandment, which names both the one and the other. And however human laws may vary herein, the law of God makes no difference; but lays us under the ſame obligation of obeying both the one and the other.

3. But before we conſider, How we are to obey our parents, it may be enquired, how long we are to obey them? Are children to obey, only till they run alone? Till they go to ſchool? Till they can read and write? Or till they are as tall as their parents? Or, attain to years of diſcretion? Nay, if they obey only becauſe they fear to be beaten, or becauſe otherwiſe they cannot procure food and raiment, what avails ſuch obedience? Thoſe only who obey their parents, when they can live without them, and when they neither hope nor fear any thing from them, ſhall have praiſe from God.

4 "But is a man that is at age, or a woman that is married, under any farther obligation to obey their parents?" With regard to marriage, although it is true, that a man is to leave father and mother, and to cleave unto his wife: and by parity of reaſon, ſhe is to leave father and mother and cleave unto her huſband: (in conſequence of which there may be ſome particular caſes wherein conjugal duty muſt take place of filial) yet I cannot learn either from Scripture or reaſon, that marriage either cancels or leſſens the general obligation of filial duty. Much leſs does it appear, that it is either cancelled or leſſened by our having lived one and twenty years. I never underſtood it ſo, in my own caſe. When I had lived

lived upwards of thirty years, I looked upon myself to ſtand juſt in the ſame relation to my father as I did when I was ten years old. And when I was between forty and fifty, I judged myſelf full as much obliged to obey my mother in every thing lawful, as I did when I was in my leading-ſtrings.

5. But what is implied in, "Children, obey your parents in all things?" Certainly the firſt point of obedience is to do nothing which your father or mother forbids, whether it be great or ſmall. Nothing is more plain than that the prohibition of a parent binds every conſcientious child: that is, except the thing prohibited, is clearly enjoined of God. Nor indeed is this all: the matter may be carried a little farther ſtill. A tender parent may totally diſapprove what he does not care flatly to forbid. What is the duty of a child in this caſe? How far is that diſapprobation to be regarded? Whether it be equivalent to a prohibition or not, a perſon who would have a conſcience void of offence, ſhould undoubtedly keep on the ſafe ſide, and avoid what may perhaps be evil. It is ſurely the more excellent way, to do nothing which you know your parents diſapprove. To act otherwiſe ſeems to imply a degree of diſobedience, which one of a tender conſcience would with to avoid.

6. The ſecond thing implied in this direction is, Do every thing which your father or mother bids, be it great or ſmall, provided it be not contrary to any command of God. Herein God has given a power to parents, which even ſovereign princes have not. The King of *England*, for inſtance, is a ſovereign Prince: yet he has not power to bid me do the leaſt thing, unleſs the law

of the land requires me so to do: for he has no power but to execute the law. The will of the King is no law to the subject. But the will of the parent is a law to the child: who is bound in conscience to submit thereto, unless it be contrary to the law of God.

7. It is with admirable wisdom, that the Father of spirits has given this direction, that as the strength of the parents supplies the want of strength, and the understanding of the parents the want of understanding in their children, till they have strength and understanding of their own, so the will of the parents may guide that of their children, till they have wisdom and experience to guide themselves. This therefore is the very first thing, which children have to learn. That they are to obey their parents, to submit to their will in all things: and this they may be inured to, long before they understand the reason of it. And indeed long before they are capable of understanding any of the principles of religion. Accordingly St. *Paul* directs all parents to bring up their children "in the discipline and doctrine of the Lord." For their will may be broke by proper discipline, even in their early infancy; whereas it must be a considerable time after, before they are capable of instruction. This therefore is the first point of all: bow down their wills from the very first dawn of reason: and by habituating them to your will, prepare them for submitting to the will of their Father which is in heaven.

8. But how few children do we find, even of six or eight years old, that understand any thing of this? Indeed how should they understand it, having they have none to teach them? Are not their

their parents, father as well as mother, full as ignorant of the matter as themſelves? Whom do you find, even among religious people, that have the leaſt conception of it? Have not you ſeen the proof of it with your own eyes! Have not you been preſent, when a father or a mother has ſaid, "My child, do ſo or ſo?" The child without any ceremony, anſwered peremptorily, "I wont." And the parent quietly paſſes it by, without any further notice. And does he or ſhe not ſee, that by this cruel indulgence, they are training up their child, by that rebellion againſt their parents, to rebellion againſt God? Conſequently they are training him up for the everlaſting fire prepared for the devil and his angels! Did they duly conſider this, they would neither eat, nor drink, nor ſleep, till they had taught him a better leſſon, and made him thoroughly afraid of ever giving that diabolical anſwer again.

9. Let me reaſon this caſe a little farther, with you parents that fear God. If you *do* fear God, how dare you ſuffer a child above a year old to ſay, *I will do* what you forbid; or *I wont do* what you bid, and to go unpuniſhed? Why do not you ſtop him at once, that he may never dare to ſay ſo again? Have you no bowels, no compaſſion for your child? No regard for his ſalvation or deſtruction? Would you ſuffer him to curſe or ſwear in your preſence, and take no notice of it? Why, diſobedience is as certain a way to damnation as curſing and ſwearing. Stop him, ſtop him at firſt in the name of God. Do not *ſpare the rod*, and *ſpoil the child*. If you have not the heart of a tyger, do not give up your child to his own will, that is, to the devil.

Though

Though it be pain to yourself, yet pluck your offspring out of the lion's teeth. Make them submit, that they may not perish. Break their will, that you may save their soul.

10. I cannot tell how to enforce this point sufficiently. To fix it upon your minds more strongly, permit me to add part of a letter on the subject, printed some years ago.

"In order to form the minds of children, the first thing to be done, is to conquer their will. To inform their understanding is a work of time, and must proceed by slow degrees: but the subjecting the will is a thing which must be done at once: and the sooner the better. For, by our neglecting timely correction, they contract a stubbornness, which is hardly ever to be conquered; and never without using that severity, which would be as painful to us as to the children. Therefore I call those cruel parents, who pass for kind and indulgent: who permit their children to contract habits, which they know must be afterwards broken.

"I insist upon conquering the wills of children betimes; because this is the only foundation for a religious education. When this is thoroughly done, then a child is capable of being governed by the reason of its parent, till its own understanding comes to maturity.

"I cannot yet dismiss this subject. As self-will is the root of all sin and misery, so whatever cherishes this in children, insures their after-wretchedness and irreligion; and whatever checks and mortifies it, promotes their future happiness and piety. This is still more evident, if we consider that religion is nothing else but the doing the will of God and not our own: and that self-will

will being the grand impediment to our temporal and eternal happineſs, no indulgence of it can be trivial; no denial of it unprofitable. Heaven or hell depends on this alone. So that the parent who ſtudies to ſubdue it in his children, works together with God in the ſaving of a ſoul: the parent who indulges it, does the devil's work, makes religion impracticable, ſalvation unattainable; and does all that in him lies, to damn his child, ſoul and body for ever!

"This therefore I cannot but earneſtly repeat, break their wills betimes. Begin this great work before they can run alone, before they can ſpeak plain, or perhaps ſpeak at all. Whatever pains it coſt, conquer their ſtubbornneſs: break the will, if you would not damn the child. I conjure you not to neglect, not to delay this! Therefore, 1. Let a child from a year old, be taught to fear the rod and to cry ſoftly. In order to this, 2. Let him have nothing he cries for, abſolutely nothing, great or ſmall; elſe you undo your own work. 3. At all events, from that age, make him do as he is bid, if you whip him ten times running to effect it: let none perſuade you, it is cruelty to do this: it is cruelty not to do it. Break his will now, and his ſoul will live, and he will probably bleſs you to all eternity."

11. On the contrary, how dreadful are the conſequences of that accurſed kindneſs, which gives children their own wills, and does not bow down their necks from their infancy. It is chiefly owing to this, that ſo many religious parents bring up their children that have no religion at all: children that when they are grown up, have no regard for them: perhaps ſet them at naught, and are ready to pick out their eyes!

Why

Why is this, but because their wills were not broken at first, because they were not inured from their early infancy, to obey their parents in all things, and to submit to their will, as to the will of God? Because they were not taught from the very first dawn of reason, that the will of their parents was to them the will of God: that to resist it was rebellion against God, and an inlet to all ungodliness.

II. 1. This may suffice for the explication of the text: I proceed to the application of it. And permit me first to apply to you that are parents, and as such concerned to teach your children. Do you know these things yourselves? Are *you* thoroughly convinced of these important truths? Have you laid them to heart? And have you put them in practice, with regard to your own children? Have you inured them to discipline, before they were capable of instruction? Have you broken their wills from their earliest infancy? And do you still continue so to do, in opposition both to nature and custom? Did you explain to them, as soon as their understanding began to open, the reasons of your proceeding thus? Did you point out to them the will of God, as the sole law of every intelligent creature? And shew them, it is the will of God, that they should obey you in all things? Do you inculcate this over and over again, till they perfectly comprehend it? O never be weary of this labour of love: and your labour will not always be in vain.

2. At least do not teach them to disobey, by rewarding them for disobedience. Remember! You do this every time you give them any thing, because

becauſe they cry for it. And herein they are apt ſcholars: if you reward them for crying, they will certainly cry again. So that there is no end, unleſs you make it a ſacred rule, to give them nothing which they cry for. And the ſhorteſt way to do this, is, Never ſuffer them to cry aloud. Train them up to obedience in this one inſtance, and you will eaſily bring them to obey in others. Why ſhould you not begin to-day? Surely you ſee what is the moſt excellent way: beſt for your own ſoul. Why then do you diſobey? Becauſe you are a coward; becauſe you want reſolution. And doubtleſs it requires no ſmall patience, more than nature ever gave. But the grace of God is ſufficient for you: you can do all things through Chriſt that ſtrengtheneth you. This grace is ſufficient to give you diligence, as well as reſolution: otherwiſe lazineſs will be as great a hinderance as cowardice. For without much pains you cannot conquer: nothing can be done with a ſlack hand; labour on: never tire: lay line upon line, till patience has its perfect work.

3. But there is another hinderance that is full as hard to be conquered as either lazineſs or cowardice. It is called fondneſs, and is uſually miſtaken for love: but O, how widely different from it! It is real hate: and hate of the moſt miſchievous kind, tending to deſtroy both body and ſoul in hell! O give not way to it any longer, no not for a moment! Fight againſt it with your might! For the love of God; for the love of your children; for the love of your own ſoul!

4. I have one word more to ſay to parents; to mothers in particular. If in ſpite of all the

Apoſtle

Apoſtle can ſay, you encourage your children by your example, to *adorn* themſelves *with gold, or pearls, or coſtly apparel*, you and they muſt drop into the pit together. But if they do it, though you ſet them a better example, ſtill it is yours, as well as their fault. For if you did not put any ornament on your little child that you would not wear yourſelf (which would be utter diſtraction, and far more inexcuſable than putting it on your own arms or head) yet you did not inure them to obey you from their infancy, and teach them the duty of it, from at leaſt two years old. Otherwiſe they would not have dared to do any thing great or ſmall, contrary to your will. Whenever therefore I ſee the fine-dreſſed daughter of a plain dreſſed mother, I ſee at once the mother is defective either in knowledge or religion. Either ſhe is ignorant of her own or her child's duty; or ſhe has not practiſed what ſhe knows.

5. I cannot diſmiſs this ſubject yet. I am pained continually, at ſeeing religious parents ſuffer their children to run into the ſame folly of dreſs, as if they had no religion at all. In God's name, why do you ſuffer them to vary a hair's breadth from *your* example? "Why, they will do it" They will! Whoſe fault is that? Why did not you break their will from their infancy? At leaſt do it now: better late than never. It ſhould have been done before they were two years old. It may be done at eight or ten, though with far more difficulty. However do it now: and accept that difficulty, as the juſt reward for your paſt neglect. Now at leaſt carry your point whatever it coſts. Be not mealy-mouthed, ſay not, like foolish *Eli*, "Nay my children; it is no

no good report which I hear of you;" inſtead of reſtraining them with a ſtrong hand; but ſpeak (though as calmly as poſſible, yet) firmly and peremptorily, "I will have it ſo;" and do as you ſay. Inſtil diligently into them the love of plain dreſs, and hatred of finery. Shew them the reaſon of your own plainneſs of dreſs, and ſhew it is equally reaſonable for them. Bid defiance to indolence, to cowardice, to fooliſh fondneſs, and at all events, carry your point; if you love their ſouls, make and keep them juſt as plain as yourſelves. And I charge you, grandmothers, before God, do not hinder your daughters herein. Do not dare to give the child any thing which the mother denies. Never take the part of the children againſt the parent; never blame her before them. If you do not ſtrengthen her authority, as you ought to do, at leaſt do not weaken it: but if you have either ſenſe or piety left, help her on in the work of real kindneſs.

6. Permit me now to apply myſelf to you, Children: particularly, you that are the children of religious parents. Indeed if you have no fear of God before your eyes, I have no concern with you at preſent: but if you have, if you really fear God, and have a deſire to pleaſe him, you deſire to underſtand all his commandments, the fifth in particular. Did you ever underſtand it yet? Do you now underſtand what is your duty to your father and mother? Do you know, at leaſt do you conſider, That by the divine appointment *their* will is a law to *you?* Have you ever conſidered the extent of that obedience to your parents which God requires? *Children, obey your parents* in all things? No exception, but of things unlawful. Have your practiſed yur duty

in this extent? Did you ever so much as intend it?

7. Deal faithfully with your own souls. Is your conscience now clear in this matter? Do you do nothing which you know to be contrary to the will either of your father or mother? Do you never do any thing (though ever so much inclined to it) which he or she forbids? Do you abstain from every thing which they dislike, as far as you can in conscience? On the other hand, are you careful to do, whatever a parent bids? Do you study and contrive how to please them? To make their lives as easy and pleasant as you can? Whoever you are that add this to your general care, to please God in all things, Blessed art thou of the Lord! "Thy days shall be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee."

8. But as for you who are little concerned about this matter, who do not make it a point of conscience, to obey your parents in all things, but sometimes obey them, as it happens, and sometimes not, who frequently do what they forbid or disapprove, and neglect what they bid you do: suppose you awake out of sleep, that you begin to feel yourself a sinner, and begin to cry to God for mercy, is it any wonder that you find no answer, while you are under the guilt of unrepented sin? How can you expect mercy from God till you obey your parents? But suppose you have, by an uncommon miracle of mercy, tasted of the pardoning love of God, can it be expected, although you hunger and thirst after righteousness, after the perfect love of God, that you should ever attain it, ever be satisfied therewith, while you live in outward sin, in the wilful transgression

transgreſſion of a known law of God, in diſobedience to your parents? Is it not rather a wonder, that he has not withdrawn his Holy Spirit from you? That he ſtill continues to ſtrive with you, though you continually grieve his ſpirit? O grieve him no more! By the grace of God obey them in all things from this moment! As ſoon as you come home, as ſoon as you ſet foot within the door, begin an entirely new courſe: look upon your father and mother with new eyes: ſee them as repreſenting your father which is in heaven. Endeavour, ſtudy, rejoice, to pleaſe, to help, to obey them in all things. Behave not barely as their child, but as their ſervant for Chriſt's ſake. O how will you then love one another! In a manner unknown before. God will bleſs you to them and them to you: all around will feel that God is with you of a truth. Many ſhall ſee it and praiſe God: and the fruit of it ſhall remain, when both you and they are lodged in Abraham's boſom.

SERMON

SERMON XCIX.

On Obedience to Pastors.

Hebrews xiii. 17.

Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves; for they watch over your souls, as they that shall give account, that they may do this with joy, and not with grief; for that is unprofitable for you.

1. EXCEEDING few, not only among nominal Christians, but among truly religious men, have any clear conception of the important doctrine, which is here delivered by the Apostle. Very many scarce think of it, and hardly know that there is any such direction in the Bible. And the greater part of those who know it is there, and imagine they follow it, do not understand it, but lean too much either to the right hand or to the left, to one extreme or the other.

It

It is well known to what an evtravagant height the Romaniſts in general carry this direction. Many of them believe an implicit faith is due to the doctrines delivered by thoſe that rule over them, and that implicit obedience ought to be paid, to whatever commands they give: and not much leſs has been inſiſted on, by ſeveral eminent men of the Church of *England*. Although it is true that the generality of Proteſtants are apt to run to the other extreme: allowing their Paſtors no authority at all, but making them both the creatures and the ſervants of their congregations. And very many there are of our own Church who agree with them herein: ſuppoſing the Paſtors to be altogether dependent upon the people; who in their judgment have a right to direct, as well as to chuſe their Miniſters.

2. But is it not poſſible, to find a medium between theſe two extremes? Is there any neceſſity for us to run, either into one or into the other? If we ſet human laws out of the queſtion, and ſimply attend to the oracles of God, we may certainly diſcover a middle path, in this important matter. In order thereto, let us carefully examine the words of the Apoſtle above recited. Let us conſider,

I. Who are the perſons mentioned in the text, "they that rule over us?"

Secondly, Who are they whom the Apoſtle directs, to "obey and ſubmit themſelves" to them?

Thirdly, What is the meaning of this direction? In what ſenſe are they to "obey and ſubmit themſelves?" I ſhall then endeavour to make a ſuitable application of the whole.

I. 1. Conſider we, firſt, Who are the perſons mentioned in the text, "they that have the rule over you?" I do not conceive that the words of the Apoſtle are properly tranſlated; becauſe this tranſlation makes the ſentence little better than tautology. If they "rule over you," you are certainly ruled by them: ſo that according to this tranſlation, you are only enjoined to do what you do already: to obey thoſe whom you do obey. Now there is another meaning of the Greek word, which ſeems abundantly more proper: it means to *guide*, as well as to rule. And thus, it ſeems, it ſhould be taken here. The direction then, when applied to our ſpiritual guides, is plain and pertinent.

2. This interpretation ſeems to be confirmed by the ſeventh verſe; which fixes the meaning of this. "Remember them which have the rule over you, who have ſpoken unto you the word of God." The Apoſtle here ſhews, by the latter clauſe of the ſentence, whom he meant in the former. Thoſe that "were over them" were the ſame perſons "who ſpoke unto them the word of God:" that is, they were their Paſtors, thoſe who guided and fed this part of the flock of Chriſt.

3. But by whom are theſe guides to be appointed? And what are they ſuppoſed to do, in order to be entitled to the obedience which is here preſcribed?

Volumes upon volumes have been wrote on that knotty queſtion, "By whom are guides of ſouls to be appointed?" I do not intend here, to enter at all, into the diſpute concerning Church-Government: neither to debate, whether it be advantageous or prejudicial to the intereſt of true

religion,

religion, that the Church and State ſhould be blended together, as they have been ever ſince the time of *Conſtantine*, in every part of the Roman Empire, where chriſtianity has been received. Waving all theſe points, (which may find employment enough for men that abound in leiſure) by them that guide you I mean, them that do it, if not by your choice, at leaſt by your conſent: them that you willingly accept of to be your guides, in the way to heaven.

4. But what are they ſuppoſed to do, in order to entitle them to the obedience here preſcribed?

They are ſuppoſed to go before the flock, (as is the manner of the Eaſtern Shepherds to this day) and ſo guide them in all the ways of truth and holineſs: they are to "nourith them with the words of eternal life," to feed them with "the pure milk of the word:" applying it continually "for doctrine," teaching them all the eſſential doctrines contained therein: "for reproof," warning them if they turn aſide from the way to the right hand or to the left: "for correction," ſhewing them how to amend what is amiſs, and guiding them back into the way of peace: and "for inſtruction in righteouſneſs," training them up to outward holineſs, "until they come to a perfect man, to the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt."

5. They are ſuppoſed to "watch over your ſouls, as thoſe that ſhall give account." "As thoſe that ſhall give account!" How unſpeakably ſolemn, and awful are thoſe words! May God write them upon the heart of every guide of ſouls!

"They watch, waking" while others ſleep over the flock of Chriſt; over the ſouls that he has bought

bought with a price, that he has purchased with his own blood. They have them in their hearts both by day and by night; regarding neither sleep nor food in comparison of them. Even while they sleep, their heart is waking, full of concern for their beloved children. "They watch" with deep earnestness, with uninterrupted seriousness, with unwearied care, patience and diligence, as they that are about to give an account of every particular soul, to him that standeth at the door, to the Judge of quick and dead.

II. 1. We are, Secondly, to consider, Who those are whom the Apostle directs to obey them that have the rule over them? And in order to determine this, with certainty and clearness, we shall not appeal to human institutions, but simply, (as in answering the preceding question) appeal to that decision of it, which we find in the oracles of God. Indeed we have hardly occasion to go one step farther than the text itself. Only it may be proper, first to remove out of the way some popular opinions, which have been almost every where taken for granted, but can in no-wise be proved.

2. It is usually supposed, first, that the Apostle is here directing *Parishioners* to obey and submit themselves to the *Minister* of their Parish. But can any one bring the least shadow of proof for this from the Holy Scripture! Where is it written, that we are bound to obey any Minister, because we live in what is called his Parish? "Yes, you say, we are bound to "obey every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake." True, in all things indifferent; but this is not so: it is exceeding far from it. It is far from being a thing indifferent to *me*, Who is the guide of my soul. I dare not

not receieve one as my guide to heaven, that is himſelf in the high road to hell. I dare not take a wolf for my ſhepherd, that has not ſo much as ſheep's clothing; that is a common ſwearer, an open drunkard, a notorious ſabbath-breaker, And ſuch (the more is the ſhame, and the more the pity) are many Parochial Miniſters at this day.

3. "But are you not properly members of that congregation, to which your parents belong?" I do not apprehend that I am: I know no ſcripture that obliges me to this. I owe all deference to the commands of my parents, and willingly obey them in all things lawful. But it is not lawful to "call them Rabbi," that is, to believe or obey them implicitly. Every one muſt give an account of himſelf to God. Therefore every man muſt judge for himſelf: eſpecially in a point of ſo deep importance as this is, the choice of a guide for his ſoul.

4. But we may bring this matter to a ſhort iſſue, by recurring to the very words of the text. They that have voluntarily connected themſelves with ſuch a Paſtor, as anſwers the deſcription given therein: ſuch as do in fact watch over their ſouls, as they that ſhall give account: ſuch as do nouriſh them up with the words of eternal life; ſuch as feed them as with the pure milk of the word, and conſtantly apply it to them for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, and for inſtruction in righteouſneſs: all who have found and choſen guides of this character, of this ſpirit and behaviour, are undoubtedly required by the Apoſtle, to "obey and ſubmit themſelves" to them.

III. 1. But what is the meaning of this direction? This remains to be conſidered. In what

ſenſe,

ſenſe, and how far does the Apoſtle direct them, to "obey and ſubmit to their" ſpiritual guides?

If we attend to the proper ſenſe of the two words here uſed by the Apoſtle, we may obſerve that the former of them (πειθεσθε from πειθω to perſuade) refers to the underſtanding, the latter, ὑπεικετε to the will and outward behaviour. To begin with the former. What influence ought our ſpiritual guides to have over our underſtanding? We dare no more call our ſpiritual fathers Rabbi, than the "fathers of our fleſh." We dare no more yield implicit faith to the former than to the latter. In this ſenſe "one is our Maſter (or rather Teacher) who is in heaven." But whatever ſubmiſſion, of even our underſtanding is ſhort of this, we may, nay, we ought to yield to them.

2. To explain this a little farther. St. *James* uſes a word which is nearly allied to the former of theſe. "The wiſdom which is from above is ευπειθης eaſy to be convinced, or to be perſuaded." Now if we ought to have and to ſhew this wiſdom toward all men; we ought to have it in a more eminent degree, and to ſhew it upon every occaſion, toward thoſe that "watch over our ſouls." With regard to theſe, above all other men, we ſhould be "eaſy to be intreated:" eaſily convinced of any truth, and eaſily perſuaded to any thing that is not ſinful.

3. A word of nearly the ſame import with this, is frequently uſed by St. *Paul*; namely, επιεικης. In our tranſlation, it is more than once rendered *gentle*. But perhaps it might be more properly rendered, (if the word may be allowed) *yielding*; ready to *yield*, to give up our own will, in every thing that is not a point of duty. This amiable temper,

temper every real Chriſtian enjoys, and ſhews in his intercourſe with all men. But he ſhews it in a peculiar manner, towards thoſe that watch over his ſoul. He is not only willing to receive any inſtruction from them, to be convinced of any thing which he did not know before; to lie open to their advice, and glad to receive admonition, or reproof: but is ready to give up his own will, whenever he can do it with a clear conſcience. Whatever they deſire him to do, he does; if it be not forbidden in the word of God. Whatever they deſire him to refrain from, he does ſo; if it be not enjoined in the word of God. This is implied in thoſe words of the Apoſtle, "Submit yourſelves to them: yield to them:" give up your own will. This is meet, and right, and your bounden duty, if they do indeed watch over your ſouls, as they that ſhall give account. If you do thus "obey and ſubmit yourſelves to them," they will give an account of you *with joy: not with groaning*, as they muſt otherwiſe do: for although they ſhould be clear of your blood, yet *that would be unprofitable to you:* yea, a prelude to eternal damnation.

4. How acceptable to God was an inſtance of obedience, ſomewhat ſimilar to this! You have a large and particular account of it, in the thirty-fifth chapter of *Jeremiah*. "The word of the Lord came to Jeremiah ſaying, Go to the houſe of the Rechabites, and give them wine to drink. Then I took the whole houſe of the Rechabites (all the heads of their families) and ſet before them pots full of wine, and ſaid unto them, Drink ye wine: but they ſaid, We will drink no wine; for Jonadab, *a great man in the reign of* Jehuh, the ſon of Rechab, *from whom we are named*, *being*

being the father of our family, commanded us, Ye ſhall drink no wine, neither ye nor your ſons for ever. And we have obeyed the voice of Jonadab our father, in all that he charged us." We do not know any particular reaſon why Jonadab gave this charge to his poſterity. But as it was not ſinful, they gave this ſtrong inſtance of gratitude to their great benefactor. And how pleaſing this was to the Father of their ſpirits, we learn from the words that follow. "And Jeremiah ſaid unto the Rechabites, becauſe you have obeyed the voice of Jonadab, your father, therefore thus ſaith the Lord of hoſts, Jonadab ſhall not want a man to ſtand before my face for ever."

5. Now it is certain, Chriſtians owe full as much gratitude and obedience, to thoſe that watch over their ſouls, as ever the houſe of the *Rechabites* owed to *Jonadab* the ſon of *Rechab*. And we cannot doubt, but he is as well pleaſed with our obedience to theſe, as ever he was with their obedience to *Jonadab*. If he was ſo well-pleaſed with the gratitude and obedience of this people to their temporal benefactor, have we not all reaſon to believe, He is full as well pleaſed with the gratitude and obedience of Chriſtians, to thoſe who derive far greater bleſſings to them, than ever *Jonadab* conveyed to his poſterity?

6. It may be of uſe yet again to conſider, In what inſtances it is the duty of Chriſtians to obey and ſubmit themſelves to thoſe that watch over their ſouls. Now the things which they enjoin, muſt be either enjoined of God, or forbidden by him, or indifferent. In things forbidden of God we dare not obey them; for we are to obey God rather than man. In things enjoined of God, we do not properly obey them, but our common Father.

Father. Therefore if we are to obey them at all, it must be in things indifferent. The sum is, It is the duty of every private Christian, to obey his spiritual Pastor, by either doing or leaving undone any thing of an indifferent nature; any thing that is no way determined in the word of God.

7. But how little is this understood in the *Protestant* world? At least, in *England* and *Ireland*? Who is there, even among those, that are supposed to be good Christians, who dreams there is such a duty as this? And yet there is not a more express command, either in the Old or New Testament. No words can be more clear and plain; no command more direct and positive. Therefore certainly none who receive the scripture as the word of God, can live in the habitual breach of this, and plead innocence. Such an instance of wilful, or at least careless disobedience, must grieve the Holy Spirit of God. It cannot but hinder the grace of God from having its full effect upon the heart. It is not improbable, that this very disobedience may be one cause of the deadness of many souls: one reason of their not receiving those blessings, which they seek with some degree of sincerity.

8. It remains only, to make a short application of what has now been delivered.

You that read this, do you apply it to yourself? Do you examine yourself thereby? Do not *you* stop your own growth in grace, if not by wilful disobedience to this command; yet by careless inattention to it, by not considering it, as the importance of it deserves? If so,

you defraud yourself of many blessings, which you might enjoy. Or, are you of a better mind, of a more excellent spirit? Is it your fixt resolution and your constant endeavour, "to obey them that have the rule over you in the Lord?" To "submit yourself" as cheerfully to your spiritual, as to your natural parents? Do you ask, "Wherein should I submit to them?" The answer has been given already: not in things enjoined of God: not in things forbidden by him; but in things indifferent: in all that are not determined one way or the other, by the oracles of God. It is true, this cannot be done in some instances, without a considerable degree of self-denial, when they advise you to refrain from something that is agreeable to flesh and blood. And it cannot be obeyed in other instances, without taking up your cross; without suffering some pain or inconvenience, that is not agreeable to flesh and blood. For that solemn declaration of our Lord has place here, as well as on a thousand other occasions, "Except a man deny himself, and take up his cross daily, he cannot be my disciple." But this will not affright you, if you resolve to be, not only almost, but altogether a Christian: if you determine to fight the good fight of faith, and lay hold on eternal life.

9. I would now apply myself in a more particular manner to *you*, who desire *me* to watch over your souls. Do *you* make it a point of conscience, to *obey* me, for my Master's sake? To "submit yourselves to me" in things indifferent; things not determined in the word of God?

God? In all things that are not enjoined, nor yet forbidden in Scripture. Are you "eaſy to be entreated," as by men in general, ſo by me in particular? Eaſy to be convinced of any truth, however contrary to your former prejudices? And eaſy to be perſuaded to do or forbear any indifferent thing at *my* deſire? You cannot but ſee, that all this is clearly contained in the very words of the text. And you cannot but acknowledge, that it is highly reaſonable for you ſo to do, if I do employ all my time, all my ſubſtance, all my ſtrength both of body and ſoul, not in ſeeking my own honour, or pleaſure; but in promoting your preſent and eternal ſalvation; if I do not indeed *watch over your ſouls as one that muſt give account.*

10. Do you then take my advice (I aſk in the preſence of God and all the world) with regard to *dreſs?* I publiſhed that advice above thirty years ago; I have repeated it a thouſand times ſince. I have adviſed you not to be conformable to the world herein; to lay aſide all needleſs ornaments; to avoid all expence; to be patterns of plainneſs to all that are about you. Have you all, men and women, young and old, rich and poor, laid aſide all thoſe needleſs ornaments, which I particularly objected to? Are you all exemplarily plain in your apparel? As plain as Quakers (ſo called) or Moravians! If not, if you are ſtill dreſſed like the generality of people of your own rank and fortune, you declare hereby to all the world, that you will not obey them that are over you in the Lord. You declare, in open defiance of God and man, that

you will not *submit yourselves* to them. Many of you carry your sins on your forehead, openly and in the face of the sun. You harden your hearts against instruction and against conviction: you harden one another, especially those of you that were once convinced, and have now stifled your convictions. You encourage one another to stop your ears against the truth, and shut your eyes against the light, lest haply you should see, that you are fighting against God and against your own souls. If I were now called to give an account of you, it would be *with greans, and not with joy.* And sure that would be *unprofitable for you:* the loss would fall upon your own head.

11. I speak all this on supposition (though that is a supposition not to be made) that the Bible was silent on this head: that the scripture said nothing concerning *dress*, and left it to every one's own discretion. But if all other texts were silent, this is enough, *Submit yourselves to them that are over you in the Lord.* I bind this upon your consciences, in the sight of God. Were it only in obedience to this direction, you cannot be clear before God, unless you throw aside all needless ornaments, in utter defiance of that tyrant of fools, fashion; unless you seek only to be adorned with good works, as men and women professing godliness.

12. Perhaps you will say, "This is only a little thing; it is a mere trifle." I answer, If it be, you are the more inexcusable before God and man. What! Will you disobey a plain commandment of God for *a mere trifle?* God forbid! Is it a trifle to sin against God? To set his

authority

authority at naught? Is this a little thing? Nay, remember, there can be no little ſin, till we can find a little god! Mean time be aſſured of one thing: the more conſcientiouſly you obey your ſpiritual guides, the more powerfully will God apply the word, which they ſpeak in his name, to your heart!. The more plentifully will he water what is ſpoken, with the dew of his bleſſing: and the more proofs will you have, it is not only they that ſpeak, but the ſpirit of your Father who ſpeaketh in them.

SERMON C.

ON VISITING THE SICK.

MATT. XXV. 36.

I was sick, and ye visited me.

1. IT is generally supposed that *the means of grace* and *the ordinances of God* are equivalent terms. We commonly mean by that expression, those that are usually termed *Works of piety*, namely, hearing and reading the Scripture, receiving the Lord's Supper, public and private prayer, and fasting. And it is certain, these are the ordinary channels which convey the grace of God to the souls of men. But are they the only means of grace? Are there no other means than these, whereby God is pleased, frequently, yea ordinarily to convey his grace to them that either love or fear him? Surely there are works of mercy, as well as works of piety, which are real means of grace. They are more especially such

to

to thoſe that perform them with a ſingle eye. And thoſe that neglect them do not receive the grace which otherwiſe they might. Yea, and they looſe, by a continual neglect, the grace which they had received. Is it not hence, that many who were once ſtrong in faith, are now weak and feeble-minded? And yet they are not ſenſible whence that weakneſs comes, as they neglect none of the ordinances of God. But they might ſee whence it comes, were they ſeriouſly to conſider St. *Paul*'s account of all true believers. *We are his workmanſhip, created anew in Chriſt Jeſus unto good works, which God hath before prepared, that we might walk therein*, Eph. ii. 10.

2. The walking herein is eſſentially neceſſary, as to the continuance of that faith whereby we *are* already *ſaved by grace*, ſo to the attainment of everlaſting ſalvation. Of this we cannot doubt, if we ſeriouſly conſider that theſe are the very words of the great Judge himſelf, *Come, ye bleſſed children of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry, and ye gave me meat, thirſty, and ye gave me drink. I was a ſtranger, and ye took me in; naked, and ye clothed me; I was ſick and ye viſited me; I was in priſon, and ye came unto me*, Matt. xxv. 34, &c. *Verily I ſay unto you, inaſmuch as ye have done it to the leaſt of theſe my brethren, ye have done it unto me.* If this does not convince you that the continuance in works of mercy is neceſſary to ſalvation, conſider what the Judge of all ſays to thoſe on the left hand; *Depart, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry, and ye gave me no meat; thirſty, and ye gave me no drink:*

drink: I was a ſtranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: ſick and in priſon, and ye viſited me not. Inaſmuch as ye have not done it unto one of the leaſt of theſe, neither have ye done it unto me. You ſee, were it for this alone, they muſt *depart* from God *into everlaſting puniſhment.*

3. Is it not ſtrange, that this important truth ſhould be ſo little underſtood, or at leaſt ſhould ſo little influence the practice of them that fear God? Suppoſe this repreſentation be true, ſuppoſe the Judge of all the earth ſpeaks right, thoſe and thoſe only that feed the hungry, give drink to the thirſty, clothe the naked, relieve the ſtranger, viſit thoſe that are in priſon, according to their power and opportunity, ſhall *inherit the everlaſting kingdom.* And thoſe that do not, ſhall *depart into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.*

4. I purpoſe at preſent to confine my diſcourſe to one article of theſe, *viſiting the ſick:* a plain duty, which all that are in health may practiſe, in a higher or lower degree; and which nevertheleſs is almoſt univerſally neglected, even by thoſe that profeſs to love God. And touching this I would enquire, Firſt, What is implied in viſiting the ſick? Secondly, How is it to be performed, and Thirdly, By whom?

I. Firſt, I would enquire, What is the nature of this duty? What is implied in *viſiting the ſick?*

1. By the ſick I do not mean only thoſe that keep their bed, or that are ſick in the ſtricteſt ſenſe. Rather I would include all ſuch as are in a ſtate of affliction, whether of mind or body: and that

that, whether they are good or bad, whether they fear God or not.

"But is there need of visiting them in person? May we not relieve them at a distance? Does it not answer the same purpose if we send them help, as if we carry it ourselves? Many are so circumstanced, that they cannot attend the sick in person; and where this is the real case, it is undoubtedly sufficient for them to send help, being the only expedient they can use. But this is not properly *visiting the sick*; it is another thing. The word which we render *visit*, in its literal acceptation, means to *look upon*. And this, you well know, cannot be done, unless you are present with them. To send them assistance is therefore entirely a different thing from visiting them. The former then ought to be done, but the latter not left undone.

"But I send a physician to those that are sick; and he can do them more good than I can." He can in one respect; he can do them more good, with regard to their bodily health. But he cannot do them more good with regard to their souls, which are of infinitely greater importance. And if he could, this would not excuse *you*; his going would not fulfil *your* duty. Neither would it do the same good to *you*, unless you saw them with your own eyes. If you do not, you lose a means of grace, you loose an excellent means of increasing your thankfulness to God, who saves you from this pain and sickness, and continues your health and strength; as well as of increasing your sympathy with the afflicted, your benevolence, and all the social affections.

3. One great reason why the rich in general have so little sympathy for the poor, is because they

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they so seldom visit them. Hence it is, that, according to the common observation, one part of the world does not know what the other suffers. Many of them do not know, because they do not care to know: they keep out of the way of knowing it: and then plead their voluntary ignorance, as an excuse for their hardness of heart. "Indeed, Sir, said a person of large substance I am a very compassionate man. But to tell you the truth, I do not know any body in the world that is in want." How did this come to pass? Why, he took good care to keep out of their way. And if he fell upon any of them unawares, *he passed over on the other side.*

4. How contrary to this is both the spirit and behaviour of even people of the highest rank in a neighbouring nation! In *Paris*, Ladies of the first quality, yea, Princesses of the blood, of the Royal family, constantly visit the sick, particularly the patients in the Grand Hospital. And they not only take care to relieve their wants, (if they need any thing more than is provided for them) but attend on their sick beds, dress their sores, and perform the meanest offices for them. Here is a pattern for the English, poor or rich, mean or honourable! For many years we have abundantly copied after the follies of the French. Let us for once copy after their wisdom and virtue, worthy the imitation of the whole Christian world. Let not the gentlewomen, or even the Countesses in *England*, be ashamed to imitate those Princesses of the blood! Here is a fashion that does honour to human nature. It began in *France*; but God forbid it should end there!

5. And if your delicacy will not permit you to imitate those truly honourable Ladies; by abating

yourselves

yourſelves in the manner which they do, by performing the loweſt offices for the ſick; you may however, without humbling yourſelves ſo far, ſupply them with whatever they want. And you may adminiſter help of a more excellent kind, by ſupplying their ſpiritual wants: inſtructing them (if they need ſuch inſtruction) in the firſt principles of religion: endeavouring to ſhew them the dangerous ſtate they are in, under the wrath and curſe of God through ſin, and point to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the ſins of the world. Beſide this general inſtruction, you might have abundant opportunities, of comforting thoſe that are in pain of body or diſtreſs of mind: you might find opportunities of ſtrengthening the feeble minded, quickening thoſe that are faint and weary: and of building up thoſe that have believed, and encouraging them to *go on to perfection*. But theſe things you muſt do in your own perſon, you ſee, they cannot be done by proxy. Or ſuppoſe you could give the ſame relief to the ſick by another, you could not reap the ſame advantage to yourſelf. You could not gain that increaſe in lowlineſs, in patience, in tenderneſs of ſpirit, in ſympathy with the afflicted, which you might have gained, if you had aſſiſted them in perſon. Neither would you receive the ſame recompence in the reſurrection of the juſt, when *every man ſhall receive his own reward, according to his own labour.*

II. 1. I proceed to enquire in the ſecond place, How are we to viſit them? In what manner may this labour of love be moſt effectually performed? How may we do this, moſt to the glory

glory of God, and the benefit of our neighbour? But before ever you enter upon the work, you ſhould be deeply convinced, that you are by no means ſufficient for it: you have neither ſufficient grace, nor ſufficient underſtanding, to perform it in the moſt excellent manner. And this will convince you of the neceſſity of applying to the Strong for ſtrength, and of flying to the Father of lights, the giver of every good gift, for wiſdom: ever remembering, "There is a ſpirit in man that giveth wiſdom, and the inſpiration of the Holy One that giveth underſtanding." Whenever therefore you are about to enter upon the work, ſeek his help by earneſt prayer. Cry to him for the whole ſpirit of humility, leſt if pride ſteal into your heart if you aſcribe any thing to yourſelf, while you ſtrive to ſave others you deſtroy your own ſoul. Before and through the work, from the beginning to the end let your heart wait upon him for a continual ſupply of meekneſs and gentleneſs, of patience and long-ſuffering, that you may never be angry or diſcouraged, at whatever treatment rough or ſmooth, kind or unkind, you may meet with. Be not moved with the deep ignorance of ſome, the dulneſs, the amazing ſtupidity of others: marvel not at their peeviſhneſs or ſtubbornneſs, at their non-improvement after all the pains that you have taken; yea, at ſome of them turning back to perdition, and being worſe than they were before. Still your record is with the Lord, and your reward with the Moſt High.

2. As to the particular method of treating the ſick. You need not tie yourſelf down to any; but may continually vary your manner of proceeding, as various circumſtances may require. But

But it may not be amiſs, uſually to begin with enquiring into their outward condition. You may aſk, whether they have the neceſſaries of life? Whether they have ſufficient food and raiment? If the weather be cold, Whether they have fuel? Whether they have needful attendance? Whether they have proper advice, with regard to their bodily diſorder; eſpecially if it be of a dangerous kind? In ſeveral of theſe reſpects you may be able to give them ſome aſſiſtance yourſelf: and you may move thoſe that are more able than you, to ſupply your lack of ſervice. You might properly ſay in your own caſe, "To beg I am aſhamed:" but never be aſhamed to beg for the poor; yea, in this caſe, be an importunate beggar: do not eaſily take a denial. Uſe all the addreſs, all the underſtanding, all the influence you have: at the ſame time, truſting in him that has the hearts of all men in his hands.

3. You will then eaſily diſcern, whether there is any good office, which you can do for them with your hands. Indeed moſt of the things which are needful to be done, thoſe about them can do better than you. But in ſome you may have more ſkill, or more experience than them. And if you have, let not delicacy or honour ſtand in your way. Remember his word, "Inaſmuch as ye have done it unto the leaſt of theſe, ye have done it unto me." And think nothing too mean to do for him! Rejoice to be abaſed for his ſake!

4. Theſe little labours of love will pave your way to things of greater importance. Having ſhewn that you have a regard for their bodies you may proceed to enquire concerning their

ſouls. And here you have a large field before you: you have ſcope for exerciſing all the talents which God has given you. May you not begin with aſking, Have you ever conſidered, that God governs the world! that his Providence is over all? and over *you* in particular? Does any thing then befal you without his knowledge? or without his deſigning it for your good? He knows all you ſuffer: he knows all your pains: he ſees all your wants. He ſees, not only your affliction in general, but every particular circumſtance of it. Is he not looking down from heaven, and diſpoſing all theſe things for your profit? You may then enquire, whether he is acquainted with the general principles of religion? And afterwards lovingly and gently examine, Whether his life has been agreeable thereto? Whether he has been an outward, barefaced ſinner, or has had a form of religion? See next whether he knows any thing of the power? Of worſhipping God "in ſpirit and in truth." If he does not, endeavour to explain to him "Without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord: *and* Except a man be born again, he cannot ſee the kingdom of God." When he begins to underſtand the nature of holineſs, and the neceſſity of the New Birth, then you may preſs upon him "Repentance toward God, and faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt."

5. When you find any of them begin to fear God, it will be proper to give them one after another, ſome plain tracts, as the Inſtructions for Chriſtians, Awake thou that ſleepeſt, and the Nature and Deſign of Chriſtianity. At the next viſit you may enquire, What they have read? what they remember? and what they underſtand?

underſtand? And then will be the time to enforce what they underſtand, and if poſſible, impreſs it on their hearts. Be ſure to conclude every meeting with prayer. If you cannot yet pray without a form, you may uſe ſome of thoſe compoſed by Mr. *Spinckes*, or any other pious writer. But the ſooner you break through this backwardneſs, the better. Aſk of God, and he will open your mouth.

6. Together with the more important leſſons, which you endeavour to teach all the poor whom you viſit, it would be a deed of charity to teach them two things more, which they are generally little acquainted with: induſtry and cleanlineſs. It was ſaid by a pious man, "Cleanlineſs is next to Godlineſs." Indeed the want of it is a ſcandal to all religion; cauſing the way of truth to be evil ſpoken of. And without induſtry we are neither fit for this world, nor for the world to come. With regard to both, "Whatſoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might."

III. 1. The third point to be conſidered, is, By whom is this duty to be performed? The anſwer is ready, By all that deſire to *inherit the kingdom* of their Father, which was prepared for them from the foundation of the world. For thus ſaith the Lord, "Come ye bleſſed—inherit the kingdom—For I was ſick and ye viſited me." And to thoſe on the left hand, "Depart, ye curſed—for I was ſick and ye viſited me not." Does not this plainly imply, that as all who do this, are "bleſſed and ſhall inherit the kingdom:" ſo all who do it not, are *curſed*, and ſhall *depart into everlaſting fire*.

2. All therefore who desire to escape everlasting fire, and to inherit the everlasting kingdom, are equally concerned, according to their power, to practise this important duty. It is equally incumbent on young and old, rich and poor, men and women, according to their ability. None are so young, if they desire to save their own souls, as to be excused from assisting their neighbours. None are so poor (unless they want the necessaries of life) but they are called to do something more or less, at whatever time they can spare, for the relief and comfort of their afflicted fellow-sufferers.

3. But those "who are rich in this world," who have more than the conveniences of life, are peculiarly called of God to this blessed work, and pointed out to it by his gracious providence. As you are not under a necessity of working for your bread, you have your time at your own disposal. You may therefore allot some part of it every day for this labour of love. If it be practicable it is far best to have a fixed hour, (for "any time, we say, is no time,") and not to employ that time in any other business, without urgent necessity. You have likewise a peculiar advantage over many, by your station in life. Being superior in rank to them, you have the more influence on that very account. Your inferiors of course look up to you with a kind of reverence. And the condescension which you shew in visiting them, gives them a prejudice in your favour, which inclines them to hear you with attention, and willingly receive what you say. Improve this prejudice to the uttermost for the benefit of their souls, as well as their bodies. While you are eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame, a husband

husband to the widow, and a father to the fatherless, see that you still keep a higher end in view, even the saving of souls from death, and that you labour to make all you say and do, subservient to that great end.

4. "But have *the poor* themselves any part or lot in this matter? Are they any way concerned in visiting the sick?" What can they give to others, who have hardly the conveniences, or perhaps necessaries of life for themselves? If they have not, yet they need not be wholly excluded from the blessing which attends the practice of this duty. Even those may remember that excellent rule, "Let our conveniences give way to our neighbour's necessities; and our necessities give way to our neighbour's extremities." And few are so poor, as not to be able sometimes to give *two mites:* but if they are not, if they have no money to give, may they not give what is of more value? Yea, of more value than thousands of gold and silver? If you speak "in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth," may not the words you speak be health to the soul, and marrow to the bones? Can you give them nothing? Nay, in administering to them the grace of God, you give them more than all this world is worth! Go on! Go on! Thou poor disciple of a poor Master! Do as he did in the days of his flesh! Whenever thou hast an opportunity, go about doing good and healing all that are oppressed of the devil: encouraging them to shake off his chains, and fly immediately to him

"Who sets the prisoners free, and breaks
The iron bondage from their necks."

Above all, give them your prayers. Pray with them: pray for them! And who knows but you may ſave their ſouls alive?

5. You that are *old*, whoſe feet are ready to ſtumble upon the dark mountains, may not you do a little more good, before you go hence and are no more ſeen! O remember

> "'Tis time to live, if you grow old:
> Of little life the beſt to make,
> And manage wiſely the laſt ſtake!"

As you have lived many years, it may be hoped you have attained ſuch knowledge as may be of uſe to others. You have certainly more knowledge of men, which is commonly learnt by dear-bought experience. With what ſtrength you have left, employ the few moments you have to ſpare, in miniſtering to thoſe who are weaker than yourſelves. Your grey hairs will not fail to give you authority, and add weight to what you ſpeak. You may frequently urge, to increaſe their attention,

> "Believe me, youth; for I am read in cares,
> And groan beneath the weight of more than threeſcore years."

You have frequently been a ſufferer yourſelf; perhaps you are ſo ſtill. So much the more give them all the aſſiſtance you can, both with regard to their ſouls and bodies, before they and you go to the place whence you will not return.

6. On the other hand, you that are *young* have ſeveral advantages that are almoſt peculiar to yourſelves. You have generally a flow of ſpirits, and a livelineſs of temper, which, by the grace of God, make you willing to undertake, and capable

of

of performing many good works, at which others would be diſcouraged. And you have your health and ſtrength of body, whereby you are eminently qualified, to aſſiſt the ſick and thoſe that have no ſtrength. You are able to take up and carry the croſſes, which may be expected to lie in the way. Employ then your whole vigour of body and mind, in miniſtering to your afflicted brethren. And bleſs God that you have them to employ, in ſo honourable a ſervice: like thoſe heavenly "ſervants of his that do his pleaſure," by continually miniſtering to the heirs of ſalvation.

7. "But may not *women* as well as men, bear a part in this honourable ſervice?" Undoubtedly they may: nay, they ought: it is their meet, right and their bounden duty. Herein there is no difference: "there is neither male nor female in Chriſt Jeſus." Indeed it has long paſſed for a maxim with many, that "Women are only to be ſeen; not heard." And accordingly many of them are brought up in ſuch a manner, as if they were only deſigned for agreeable play-things! But is this doing honour to the ſex? Or is it a real kindneſs to them? No; it is the deepeſt unkindneſs: it is horrid cruelty: it is mere Turkiſh barbarity. And I know not how any woman of ſenſe and ſpirit can ſubmit to it. Let all you that have it in your power aſſert the right, which the God of nature has given you. Yield not to that vile bondage any longer. You, as well as men, are rational creatures. You, like them, were made in the image of God: you are equally candidates for immortality. You too are called of God, as you have time, to *do good unto all men*. Be *not diſobedient to the heavenly calling*. Whenever

Whenever you have an opportunity, do all the good you can, particularly to your poor ſick neighbour. And every one of *you* likewiſe *ſhall receive* your "own reward according to your own labour."

8. It is well known, that in the Primitive Church, there were women particularly appointed for this work. Indeed there was one or more ſuch in every Chriſtian congregation under heaven. They were then termed *Deaconeſſes*, that is, *Servants:* ſervants of the Church and of its great Maſter. Such was *Phebe*, (mentioned by St. *Paul*, Rom. xvi. 1.) *a Deaconeſs of the Church of Cenchrea.* It is true, moſt of theſe were women in years, and well experienced in the work of God. But were the young wholly excluded from that ſervice? No: neither need they be, provided they know in whom they have believed, and ſhew that they are holy of heart, by being holy in all manner of converſation. Such a Deaconeſs, if ſhe anſwered her picture, was Mr. *Law's Miranda.* Would any one object to her viſiting and relieving the ſick and poor, becauſe ſhe was a woman? Nay, and a young one too? Do any of you that are young deſire to tread in her ſteps? Have you a pleaſing form? An agreeable addreſs? So much the better, if you are wholly devoted to God. He will uſe theſe, if your eye be ſingle, to make your words ſtrike the deeper. And while you miniſter to others, how many bleſſings may redound into your own boſom? Hereby your natural levity may be deſtroyed, your fondneſs for trifles cured, your wrong tempers corrected, your evil habits weakened, until they are rooted out. And you will be prepared to adorn the doctrine of God our Saviour, in every future

future ſcene of life, only be very wary, if you viſit or converſe with thoſe of the other ſex, leſt your affections be entangled, on one ſide or the other, and ſo you find a curſe inſtead of a bleſſing.

9. Seeing then this is a duty to which we are called, rich and poor, young and old, male and female; (and it would be well if parents would train up their children herein, as well as in ſaying their prayers and going to church:) let the time paſt ſuffice that almoſt all of us have neglected it, as by general conſent. O what need has every one of us to ſay, "Lord, forgive me my ſins of omiſſion!" Well, in the name of God let us now from this day ſet about it with general conſent. And I pray, let it never go out of your mind, that this is a duty which you cannot perform by proxy: unleſs in one only caſe; unleſs you are diſabled by your own pain or weakneſs. In that only caſe, it ſuffices to ſend the relief which you would otherwiſe give. Begin, my dear brethren, begin now, elſe the impreſſion which you now feel will wear off; and poſſibly, it may never return! What then will be the conſequence? Inſtead of hearing that word, "Come, ye bleſſed—For I was ſick and ye viſited me:" you muſt hear that awful ſentence, "Depart, ye curſed!—For I was ſick and ye viſited me not!"

SERMON

SERMON CI.

ON GOOD WORKS.

Preached before the Humane Society.

MATT. XXV. 34.

Come ye bleſſed of my Father! Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

1. REASON alone will convince every fair enquirer, That God "is a rewarder of them that diligently ſeek him." This alone teaches him to ſay, "Doubtleſs there is a reward for the righteous: there is a God that judgeth the earth." But how little information do we receive from unaſſiſted reaſon, touching the particulars contained in this general truth? As eye hath not ſeen, or ear heard, ſo neither could it naturally enter into our heart to conceive, the circumſtances of that awful day, wherein God will judge the world. No information of this kind could be given, but from the great Judge himſelf. And what an amazing inſtance of condeſcenſion

deſcenſion it is, that the Creator, the Governor the Lord, the Judge of all, ſhould deign to give us ſo clear and particular an account of that ſolemn tranſaction. If the learned Heathen acknowledged the ſublimity of that account which *Moſes* gives of the Creation, what would he have ſaid, if he had heard this account, of the Son of man coming in his glory? Here indeed is no laboured pomp of words, no ornaments of language. This would not have ſuited either the ſpeaker or the occaſion. But what inexpreſſible dignity of thought! See him "coming in the clouds of heaven! And all the angels with him!" See him "ſitting on the throne of his glory, and all the nations gathered before him!" And ſhall he ſeparate them, placing the good on his right hand, and the wicked on his left? "Then ſhall the King ſay"—With what admirable propriety is the expreſſion varied? "The Son of man" comes down to judge the children of men. *The King* diſtributes rewards and puniſhments, to his obedient or rebellious ſubjects. "Then ſhall the King ſay to them on his right hand, Come, ye bleſſed of my Father! Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.

2. "Prepared for you from the foundation of the world"—But does this agree with the common ſuppoſition, That God created man merely to ſupply the vacant thrones of the rebel angels? Does it not rather ſeem to imply, That he would have created man, though the angels had never fallen? Inaſmuch as he then prepared the kingdom for his human children, when he laid the foundation of the earth.

3. *Inherit the kingdom*—as being *heirs of God, and joint heirs* with his beloved Son. It is your right,

right, seeing I have purchased "eternal redemption for all them that obey me." And ye did obey me in the days of your flesh. "Ye believed in the Father, and also in me." Ye loved the Lord your God: and that love constrained you to love all mankind. Ye continued in the faith that wrought by love. Ye shewed your faith by your works. "For I was hungry, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye cloathed me: I was sick, and in prison; and ye came unto me."

4. But in what sense are we to understand the words that follow? "Lord, when saw we thee hungry, and gave thee meat? Or thirsty, and gave thee drink?" They cannot be literally understood: they cannot answer in these very words: because it is not possible they should be ignorant, that God had really wrought by them. Is it not then manifest, that these words are to be taken in a figurative sense? And can they imply any more than that all which they have done will appear as nothing to them, will as it were vanish away, in view of what God their Saviour had done and suffered for them!

5. But "the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it to one of the least of these my brethren, ye did it unto me." What a declaration this! Worthy to be had in everlasting remembrance! May the finger of the living God write it upon all our hearts!

I would take occasion from hence, first, to make a few reflections on good works in general: secondly, to consider in particular that institution, for the promotion of which we are now assembled

assembled: and in the third place, to make a short application.

I. 1. And first, I would make a few reflections upon good works in general.

I am not insensible, that many, even serious people, are jealous of all that is spoken upon this subject: nay, and whenever the necessity of good works is strongly insisted on, take for granted, that he who speaks in this manner, is but one remove from Popery. But should we, for fear of this, or of any other reproach, refrain from speaking "the truth as it is in Jesus?" Should we, on any consideration, "shun to declare the whole counsel of God?" Nay, if a false prophet could utter that solemn word, how much more may the ministers of Christ, "We cannot go beyond the word of the Lord, *to speak* either more or less?"

2. Is it not to be lamented, that any, who fear God, should desire us to do otherwise? And that by speaking otherwise themselves, they should occasion the way of truth to be evil spoken of? I mean, in particular, the way of salvation by faith, which on this very account is despised, nay, had in abomination by many sensible men. It is now above forty years, since this grand scriptural doctrine, "By grace ye are saved through faith," began to be openly declared, by a few Clergymen of the Church of *England*. And not long after, some who heard, but did not understand, attempted to preach the same doctrine, but miserably mangled it, wresting the Scripture, and "making void the law through faith."

3. Some of these in order to exalt the value of faith, have utterly depreciated good works. They

ſpeak of them as not only not neceſſary to ſalvation, but as greatly obſtructive to it. They repreſent them as abundantly more dangerous than evil ones, to thoſe who are ſeeking to ſave their ſouls. One cries aloud, "More people go to hell by praying, than by thieving." Another ſcreams out, "Away with your works! Have done with your works, or you cannot come to Chriſt!" And this unſcriptural, irrational, heatheniſh declamation is called, "Preaching the goſpel!"

4. But "ſhall not the Judge of all the earth ſpeak as well as do right?" Will not "he be juſtified in his ſaying and clear when he is judged?" Aſſuredly he will. And upon his authority we muſt continue to declare, That whenever you do good to any for his ſake, when you feed the hungry, give drink to the thirſty; when you aſſiſt the ſtranger, or clothe the naked; when you viſit them that are ſick or in priſon; theſe are not *ſplendid ſins*, as one marvellouſly calls them; but "ſacrifices, wherewith God is well pleaſed."

5. Not that our Lord intended, we ſhould confine our beneficence to the bodies of men. He undoubtedly deſigned, that we ſhould be equally abundant in works of ſpiritual mercy. He died "to purify unto himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of *all* good works:" zealous, above all, to *ſave ſouls from death*, and thereby *hide a multitude of ſins*. And this is unqueſtionably included in St. *Paul's* exhortation, "As we have time, let us do good unto all men:" good in every poſſible kind, as well as in every poſſible degree. But why does not our bleſſed Lord mention works of ſpiritual mercy? He could not do it with any propriety.

propriety. It was not for him to say, "I was in error, and ye convinced me; I was in sin, and you brought me back to God." And it needed not; for in mentioning *some*, he included *all* works of mercy.

6. But may I not add one thing more, (only he that heareth, let him understand) good works are so far from being hindrances of our salvation; they are so far from being insignificant, from being of no account in christianity, that, supposing them to spring from a right principle, they are the perfection of religion. They are the highest part of that spiritual building, whereof Jesus Christ is the foundation. To those, who attentively consider the thirteenth chapter of the first Epistle to the *Corinthians*, it will be undeniably plain that what St. *Paul* there describes as the highest of all Christian graces, is properly and directly the love of our neighbour. And to him, who attentively considers the whole tenor both of the Old and New Testament, it will be equally plain, that works springing from this love are the highest part of the religion therein revealed. Of these our Lord himself says, "Hereby is my Father glorified, that ye bring forth much fruit." Much *fruit!* Does not the very expression imply the excellency of what is so termed? Is not the tree itself for the sake of the fruit? By bearing fruit, and by this alone, it attains the highest perfection it is capable of, and answers the end for which it was planted. Who, what is he then, that is called a Christian, and can speak lightly of good works?

II. 1. From these general reflections, I proceed to consider that institution in particular, for

the promotion of which we are now assembled. And in doing this, I shall first observe, The rise of this institution: secondly, The success; and thirdly, The excellency of it: after which you will give me leave to make a short application.

I. On the first head, The rise of this institution, I may be very brief, as a great part of you know it already.

1. One would wonder, (as an ingenious writer observes) that such an institution as this, of so deep importance to mankind, should appear so late in the world. Have we any thing wrote upon the subject, earlier than the tract published at *Rome*, in the year 1637? And did not the proposal then sleep for many years? Were there any more than one or two attempts, and those not effectually pursued, till the year 1700? By what steps it has been since revived and carried into execution, we are now to enquire.

2. I cannot give you a clearer view of this, than by presenting you with a short extract from the introduction to the "Plan and Reports of the Society," published two years ago.

"Many and indubitable are the instances of the possibility of restoring to life persons apparently struck with sudden death, whether by an apoplexy, convulsive fits, noxious vapours, strangling, or drowning. Cases of this nature have occured in every country. But they were considered and *neglected*, as extraordinary phenomena, from which no salutary consequence could be drawn.

3. "At length a few benevolent gentlemen in *Holland* conjectured, that some at least might have been saved, had proper means been used in time;

time; and formed themſelves into a Society, in order to make a trial. Their attempts ſucceeded far beyond their expectations. Many were reſtored, who muſt otherwiſe have periſhed. And they were at length enabled to extend their plan over the ſeven provinces.

"Their ſucceſs inſtigated other countries to follow their example. In the year 1768, the Magiſtrates of Health at *Milan* and *Venice*, iſſued orders for the treatment of drowned perſons. The city of *Hamburgh* appointed a ſimilar ordinance to be read in all the Churches. In the year 1769, the Empreſs of *Germany* publiſhed an edict, extending its directions and encouragements to every caſe, that afforded a poſſibility of relief. In the year 1771, the Magiſtrates of *Paris* founded an inſtitution in favour of the drowned.

4. "In the year 1773, Dr. *Cogan* tranſlated the Memoirs of the Society at *Amſterdam*, in order to inform our countrymen of the practicability of recovering perſons apparently drowned. And Mr. *Hawes* uniting with him, theſe gentlemen propoſed a plan for a ſimilar inſtitution in theſe kingdoms. They were ſoon enabled to form a Society for this excellent purpoſe. The plan is this.

"I. The Society will publiſh, in the moſt extenſive manner poſſible, the proper methods of treating perſons in ſuch circumſtances.

II. They will diſtribute a premium of two guineas among the firſt perſons, who attempt to recover any one taken out of the water as dead. And this reward will be given, even if the attempt is unſucceſsful, provided it has been purſued

fued two hours, according to the method laid down by the Society.

III. They will diſtribute a premium of four guineas, where the perſon is reſtored to life.

IV. They will give one guinea to any that admits the body into his houſe without delay, and furniſhes the neceſſary accommodations.

V. A number of medical gentlemen, living near the places where theſe diſaſters commonly happen, will give their aſſiſtance gratis."

II. Such was the *riſe* of this admirable inſtitution. With what ſucceſs has it been attended, is the point which I purpoſe, in the next place very briefly to conſider.

And it muſt be allowed to be not only far greater, than thoſe who deſpiſed it, had imagined, but greater than the moſt ſanguine expectations of the gentlemen, who were immediately engaged in it.

In the ſhort ſpace from its firſt eſtabliſhment in May 1774, to the end of December, eight perſons ſeemingly dead were reſtored to life.

In the year 1775, forty-ſeven were reſtored to life: thirty-two of them by the direct encouragement and aſſiſtance of the gentlemen of this Society: and the reſt by medical gentlemen and others, in conſequence of their method of treatment being generally known.

In the year 1776, forty-one perſons were reſtored to life, by the aſſiſtance of this Society. And eleven caſes of thoſe, who had been reſtored elſewhere, were communicated to them.

So

So the number of lives preſerved and reſtored, in two years and a half, ſince their firſt inſtitution, amounts to one hundred and ſeven! Add to theſe, thoſe that have been ſince reſtored, and out of two hundred and eighty-four perſons, who were dead to all appearence, no leſs than a hundred and fifty-ſeven have been reſtored to life! Such is the *ſucceſs*, which has attended them in ſo ſhort a time! Such a bleſſing has the gracious providence of God given to this infant undertaking!

III. 1. It remains only to ſhew the *excellency* of it. And this may appear from one ſingle conſideration. This inſtitution unites together in one all the various acts of mercy. The ſeveral works of charity mentioned above are all contained in this. It comprizes all corporal (if I may ſo ſpeak) and all ſpiritual benefits; all the inſtances of kindneſs, which can be ſhewn, either to the bodies or ſouls of men. To ſhew this beyond all contradiction, there needs no ſtudied eloquence, no rhetorical colouring, but ſimply and nakedly to relate the thing as it is.

2. The thing attempted, and not only attempted, but actually performed, (ſo has the goodneſs of God proſpered the labours of theſe lovers of mankind!) is no leſs in a qualified ſenſe, than reſtoring life to the dead! is it any wonder then, that the generality of men ſhould at firſt ridicule ſuch an undertaking? That they ſhould imagine the perſons, who aimed at any ſuch thing, muſt be utterly out of their ſenſes? Indeed one of old ſaid, "Why ſhould it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God ſhould raiſe the dead?" Cannot he, who beſtowed life at firſt, juſt

juſt as well beſtow it again? But it may well be thought a thing incredible, that *man* ſhould raiſe the dead! For no human power can create life. And what human power can reſtore it? Accordingly, when our Lord (whom the Jews at that time ſuppoſed to be a mere man) came to the houſe of Jairus, in order to raiſe his daughter from the dead, upon the firſt intimation of his deſign, "they laughed him to ſcorn. The maid, (ſaid he) is not dead, but ſleepeth." 'This is rather to be called ſleep than death; ſeeing her life is not at an end: but I will quickly awaken her out of this ſleep.'

3. However it is certain, ſhe was really dead, and ſo beyond all power but that of the Almighty. But ſee what power God has now given to man! (To his name be all the praiſe! See with what wiſdom he has indued theſe ſons of mercy! Teaching them to ſtop the parting ſoul, to arreſt the ſpirit juſt quitting the breathleſs clay, and taking wing for eternity? Who hath ſeen ſuch a thing? Who hath heard ſuch things? Who hath read them in the annals of antiquity? Sons of men, *can theſe dry bones live?* Can this motionleſs heart beat again? Can this clotted blood flow any more? Can theſe dry, ſtiff veſſels open, to give it paſſage? Can this cold fleſh reſume its native warmth, or thoſe eyes again ſee the ſun? Surely theſe are ſuch things, (might one not almoſt ſay, ſuch miracles?) as neither we of the preſent generation, nor our fathers had known!

4. Conſider, I intreat you, how many miracles of mercy (ſo to ſpeak) are contained in one! that poor man, who was lately numbered with the dead, by the care and pains of theſe meſſengers of

of God, again breathes the vital air, opens his eyes and ſtands upon his feet. He is reſtored to his rejoicing family, to his wife, to his (late) helpleſs children, that he may again by his honeſt labour provide them with all the neceſſaries of life. See now what ye have done, ye miniſters of mercy! Behold the fruit of your labour of love! Ye have been an huſband to the widow, a father to the fatherleſs. And hereby ye have given meat to the hungry, drink to the thirſty, clothes to naked. For hungry, thirſty, and naked theſe little ones muſt have been, had not you reſtored him that prevents it. You have more than relieved; you have prevented that ſickneſs, which might naturally have ariſen from their want of ſufficient food to eat, or raiment to put on. You have hindered thoſe orphans from wandering up and down, not having a place where to lay their head. Nay, and very poſſibly you have prevented ſome of them from being lodged in a dreary, comfortleſs priſon.

5. So great, ſo comprehenſive is the mercy, which you have ſhewn to the bodies of your fellow-creatures! But why ſhould their ſouls be left out of the account? How great are the benefits you have conferred on theſe alſo! The huſband has now again an opportunity of aſſiſting his wife, in things of the greateſt moment. He may now again ſtrengthen her hands in God, and help her to run with patience the race that is ſet before her. He may again join with her in inſtructing their children, and training them up in the way wherein they ſhould go; who may live to be a comfort to their aged parents, and uſeful members of the community.

6. Nay, it may be, you have ſnatched the poor man himſelf, not only from the jaws of death,

death, but from sinking lower than the waters, from the jaws of everlasting destruction. It cannot be doubted, but some of those, whose lives you have restored, although they had been before without God in the world, will remember themselves, and not only with their lips, but in their lives, shew forth his praise. It is highly probable, some of these (as *one* out of the *ten lepers*) will *return and give thanks to God*, real, lasting thanks, by devoting themselves to his honourable service.

7. It is remarkable, that several of those, whom you have brought back from the margin of the grave, were intoxicated at the very time when they dropped into the water. And at that very instant (which is frequently the case) they totally lost their senses. Here therefore was no place for, no possibility of repentance. They had not time, they had not sense, so much as to cry out, "Lord, have mercy!" So they were sinking through the mighty waters, in the pit of destruction! And these instruments of divine mercy plucked them at once out of the water, and out of the fire! By the same act delivered them from temporal and from eternal death!

8. Nay, one poor sinner (let it never be forgotten!) was just coming down from the ship, when (overtaken by the justice and mercy of God) her foot slipped and she fell into the river. Instantly her senses were lost, so that she could not call upon God. Yet he had not forgotten her. He sent those, who delivered her from death; at least from the death of the body. And who knows, but she may lay it to heart, and turn from the error of her ways? Who knows, but she may be saved from the second death, and with her deliverers *inherit the kingdom?*

9. One

9. One point more deſerves to be particularly remarked. Many of thoſe, who have been reſtored to life, (no leſs than eleven out of the fourteen, that were ſaved in a few months) were in the number of thoſe, that are a reproach to our nation, wilful ſelf-murderers. As many of the deſperate men, who attempt this horrid crime, are men who have had a liberal education, 'tis pity but they would conſider thoſe fine words, not of a poor narrow-ſouled Chriſtian, but of a generous Heathen, nay, a Roman! Let them calmly conſider that beautiful paſſage:

Proxima deinde tenent mœſti loca, qui ſibi letum
Inſontes perperêre manu, lucemque peroſi
Projecêre animas. Quam vellent æthere in alto
Nunc & pauperiem, & duros perferre labores!
Fata obſtant, triſtique palus innabilis undâ
Alligat, & novies Styx interfuſa coercet.*

Fata obſtant! But in favour of many, we ſee God has over-ruled fate. They are brought back over the unnavigable river. They do behold the upper ſkies. They ſee the light of the ſun. O let them ſee the light of thy countenance! And let them ſo live their few remaining days on earth, that they may live with thee for ever!

IV.

* Then crouds ſucceed, who, prodigal of breath,
Themſelves anticipate the doom of death;
Though free from guilt, they caſt their lives away,
And ſad and ſullen hate the golden day.
O with what joy the wretches now would bear
Pain, toil, and woe, to breathe the vital air!
In vain! By fate for ever are they bound
With dire Avernus, and the lake profound,
And Styx with nine wide channels roars around!

PITT's Virgil.

IV. 1. Permit me now to make a ſhort application. But to whom ſhall I direct this? Are there any here who are unhappily prejudiced againſt that revelation, which breathes nothing but benevolence! Which contains the richeſt diſplay of God's love to man, that ever was made from the foundation of the world? Yet even to *you* I would addreſs a few words; for if you are not Chriſtians, you are men. You too are ſuſceptible of kind impreſſions: you have the feelings of humanity. Has not your heart too glowed at that noble ſentiment, (worthy the heart and the lips of the higheſt Chriſtian)

Homo ſum: humani nihil a me alienum puto!

Have not you alſo ſympathized with the afflicted? How many times have you been pained at human miſery? When you have beheld a ſcene of deep diſtreſs, has not your ſoul melted within you?

> "And now and then a ſigh you ſtole,
> And tears began to flow."

But is it eaſy for any one to conceive a ſcene of deeper diſtreſs than this? Suppoſe you are ſtanding by, juſt when the meſſenger comes in, and the meſſage is delivered. "I am ſorry to tell you —but you muſt know it— Your huſband is no more. He was making haſte out of the veſſel, and his foot ſlipped.—It is true, after a time his body was found. But there it lies, without any ſigns of life." In what a condition are now both the mother and the children? Perhaps for a while ſtupid, overwhelmed, ſilent; ſtaring at each other; then burſting out into loud and bitter lamentation! Now is the time to help them; by aſſiſting thoſe who make it their buſineſs ſo to do.

Now

Now let nothing hinder you from improving the glorious opportunity. Reſtore the huſband to his diſconſolate wife, the father to his weeping children! It is true, you cannot do this in perſon: you cannot be upon the ſpot. But you may do it in an effectual manner, by aſſiſting thoſe that are. You may now by your generous contribution, *ſend* them the help which you cannot perſonally give. O ſhut not up your bowels of compaſſion towards them. Now open your hearts and your hands! If you have much, give plenteouſly! If not, give a little, with a willing mind!

2. To you who believe the Chriſtian revelation, I may ſpeak in a ſtill ſtronger manner. You believe, your bleſſed Maſter *left* you "an example, that you might tread in his ſteps." Now you know, his whole life was one labour of love. You know, how *he went about doing good*, and that without intermiſſion, declaring to all, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." Is not that then the language of your heart,

"Thy mind throughout my life be ſhewn,
While liſt'ning to the wretches' cry,
The widow's and the orphan's groan,
On mercy's wings I ſwiftly fly,
The poor and helpleſs to relieve:
My life, my all, for them to give."

Occaſions of doing this can never be wanting; for "the poor ye have always with you." But what a peculiar opportunity does the ſolemnity of this day furniſh you with, of "treading in his ſteps," after a manner which you did not before conceive? Did he ſay to the poor, afflicted parent, (doubtleſs to the ſurpriſe of many) *weep not?*

And did he ſurpriſe them ſtill more, when he ſtopped her flowing tears, by reſtoring life to her dead ſon, and "delivering him to his mother?" Did he, (notwithſtanding all that "laughed him to ſcorn") reſtore to life the daughter of Jaïrus? How many things of a nearly reſembling ſort,

"If human we may liken to divine,"

have been done, and continue to be done daily, by theſe lovers of mankind? Let every one then be ambitious of having a ſhare in this glorious work! Let every one (in a ſtronger ſenſe than Mr. *Herbert* meant)

"Join hands with God, to make a poor man live."

By your generous aſſiſtance, be ye partakers of their work, and partakers of their joy!

3. To you I need add but one word more. Remember (what was ſpoken at firſt) the ſolemn declaration of him, whoſe ye are, and whom ye ſerve, coming in the clouds of heaven! While you are promoting this comprehenſive charity, which contains feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, lodging the ſtranger, indeed all good works in one, let thoſe animating words be written on your hearts, and ſounding in your ears, "In as much as ye have done it unto one of the leaſt of theſe, ye have done it unto me."

SERMON

SERMON CII.

On Pleasing All Men.

Romans xv. 2.

Let every man please his neighbour for his good to edification.

1. UNDOUBTEDLY the duty here prescribed is incumbent on all mankind: at least on every one of those, to whom are intrusted the oracles of God. For it is here enjoined to every one without exception, that names the name of Christ. And the person whom every one is commanded to please is *his neighbour*, that is, every child of man. Only we are to remember here, what the same Apostle speaks upon a similar occasion. "If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men." In like manner we are to please all men, if it be possible as much as lieth in us: but strictly speaking, it is not possible; it is what no man ever

did, nor ever will perform. But ſuppoſe we uſe our utmoſt diligence, be the event as it may, we fulfil our duty.

2. We may farther obſerve, in how admirable a manner the Apoſtle limits this direction; otherwiſe, were it purſued without any limitation, it might produce the moſt miſchievous conſequences. We are directed to pleaſe them *for their good:* not barely for the ſake of pleaſing them, or pleaſing ourſelves: much leſs of pleaſing them to their hurt, which is ſo frequently done: indeed continually done, by thoſe who do not love their neighbour as themſelves. Nor is it only their temporal good, which we are to aim at in pleaſing our neighbour; but what is of infinitely greater conſequence; we are to do it *for their edification.* In ſuch a manner as may conduce to their ſpiritual and eternal good. We are ſo to pleaſe them, that the pleaſure may not periſh in the uſing, but may redound to their laſting advantage: may make them wiſer and better, holier and happier, both in time and in eternity.

3. Many are the treatiſes and diſcourſes which have been publiſhed on this important ſubject. But all of them that I have either ſeen or heard were miſerably defective. Hardly one of them propoſed the right end: one and all had ſome lower deſign in pleaſing men, than to ſave their ſouls, to build them up in love and holineſs. Of conſequence, they were not likely to propoſe the right means, for the attainment of that end. One celebrated tract of this kind entitled *The Courtier*, was publiſhed in *Spain*, about two hundred years ago, and tranſlated into various languages. But it has nothing to do with edification, and is therefore

fore quite wide of the mark. Another treatise entitled *The Complete Courtier*, was published in our own country, in the reign of King *Charles* the Second, and (as it seems) by a retainer to his Court: in this there are several very sensible advices, concerning our outward behaviour: and many little improprieties in word or action are observed, whereby men displease others without intending it: but this Author likewise has no views at all to the spiritual or eternal good of his neighbour. Seventy or eighty years ago another book was printed in *London* entitled *The art of Pleasing*; but as it was wrote in a languid manner, and contained only common, trite observations, it was not likely to be of use to men of understanding, and still less to men of piety.

4. But it may be asked, Has not the subject been since treated of by a writer of a very different character? Is it not exhausted, by one who was himself a consummate Master of the Art of Pleasing? And who writing to one he tenderly loved, to a favourite son, gives him all the advices which his great understanding, improved by various learning, the experience of many years, and much converse with all sorts of men, could suggest? I mean, the late Lord *Chesterfield*, the general darling of all the *Irish*, as well as the *English* nation.

5. The means of pleasing which this wise and indulgent parent continually and earnestly recommends to his darling child, and on which he doubtless formed both his tempers and outward conduct.

"Till death untimely stopp'd his tuneful tongue,"

were, first, *Making love* (in the grossest sense) to

all the married women, whom he conveniently could. (Single women he advises him to refrain from, for fear of disagreeable consequences.) Secondly, Constant and careful *dissimulation*, always wearing a mask: trusting no man upon earth, so as to let him know his real thoughts, but perpetually seming to mean what he did not mean, and seeming to be what he was not. Thirdly, Well-devised *lying* to all sorts of people, speaking what was farthest from his heart: and in particular *flattering* men, women and children as the infallible way of pleasing them.

It needs no greater art to shew that this is not the way, to please our neighbour *for his good*, or *to edification*. I shall endeavour to shew, that there is a better way of doing it: and indeed a way diametrically opposite to this. It consists

I. In removing hinderances out of the way, and

II. In using the means that directly tend to this end.

I. 1. I advise all that desire to *please their neighbour for his good to edification*, first, To remove all hinderances out of the way; or, in other words, to avoid every thing, which tends to displease wise and good men, men of sound understanding and real piety. Now *cruelty*, *malice*, *envy*, *hatred and revenge* are displeasing to all wise and good men, to all who are endued with sound understanding and genuine piety. There is likewise another temper, nearly related to these, only in a lower kind, and which is usually found in common life, wherewith men in general are not pleased. We commonly call it *ill-nature*. With all

all poſſible care avoid all theſe: nay, and whatever bears any reſemblance to them: as ſourneſs, ſternneſs, ſullenneſs, on the one hand; peeviſhneſs and fretfulneſs on the other: if ever you hope to *pleaſe your neighbour for his good to edification.*

2. Next to cruelty, malice and ſimilar tempers, with the words and actions that naturally ſpring therefrom, nothing is more diſguſtful, not only to perſons of ſenſe and religion, but even to the generality of men, than *pride*, *haughtineſs* of ſpirit, and its genuine fruit, an *aſſuming*, *arrogant overbearing* behaviour. Even uncommon learning joined with ſhining talents, will not make amends for this: but a man of eminent endowments, if he be eminently haughty, will be deſpiſed by many, and diſliked by all. Of this the famous Maſter of *Trinity* College in *Cambridge*, was a remarkable inſtance. How few perſons of his time had a ſtronger underſtanding or deeper learning than Dr. *Bently?* And yet how few were leſs beloved? Unleſs one who was little, if at all inferior to him in ſenſe of learning, and equally diſtant from humility, the Author of the Divine Legation of *Moſes*. Whoever therefore deſires to pleaſe his neighbour for his good, muſt take care of ſplitting upon this rock. Otherwiſe the ſame pride which impels him to ſeek the eſteem of his neighbour, will infallibly hinder his attaining it.

3. Almoſt as diſguſtful to the generality of men as *haughtineſs* itſelf, is a *paſſionate* temper and behaviour. Men of a tender diſpoſition are afraid even to converſe with perſons of this ſpirit. And others are not fond of their acquaintance, as frequently (perhaps when they expected nothing leſs) meeting with ſhocks, which if they bear for the

the preſent, yet they do not willingly put themſelves in the way of meeting with again. Hence paſſionate men have ſeldom many friends; at leaſt, not for any length of time. Crowds indeed may attend them for a ſeaſon, eſpecially when it may promote their intereſt. But they are uſually diſguſted one after an other, and fall off like leaves in Autumn. If therefore you deſire laſtingly to pleaſe your neighbour for his good, by all poſſible means avoid violent paſſion.

4. Yea, and if you deſire to pleaſe, even on this account, take that advice of the Apoſtle, *Put away all lying*. It is the remark of an ingenious Author, that of all vices, *lying* never yet found an apologiſt, any that would openly plead in its favour, whatever his private ſentiments might be. But it ſhould be remembered, Mr. *Addiſon* went to a better world, before Lord *Cheſterfield's* Letters were publiſhed. Perhaps his apology for it was the beſt that ever was, or can be made for ſo bad a cauſe. But after all, the labour he has beſtowed upon it "it has only ſemblance of worth; not ſubſtance." It has no ſolidity in it; it is nothing better than a ſhining phantom. And as lying can never be commendable or innocent, ſo neither can it be pleaſing: at leaſt when it is ſtript of its diſguiſe, and appears in its own ſhape. Conſequently it ought to be carefully avoided, by all thoſe who wiſh to pleaſe their neighbour for his good to edification.

5. But is not *flattery*, a man may ſay, one ſpecies of lying? And has not this been allowed in all ages, to be the ſure means of pleaſing? Has not that obſervation been confirmed by numberleſs experiments.

"*Obſequium*

"*Obsequium amicos, veritas odium parit?*"

"Flattery creates friends, plain-dealing enemies."

Has not a late witty Writer, in his "Sentimental Journey," related some striking instances of this? I answer, It is true. Flattery is pleasing for awhile, and that not only to weak minds: as the desire of praise, whether deserved or undeserved, is planted in every child of man. But it is pleasing only for awhile. As soon as the mask drops off, as soon as it appears that the speaker meant nothing by his soft words, we are pleased no longer. Every man's own experience teaches him this. And we all know, that if a man continues to flatter, after his insincerity is discovered, it is disgustful, not agreeable. Therefore even this fashionable way of lying is to be avoided, by all that are desirous of pleasing their neighbour, to his lasting advantage.

6. Nay, whoever desires to do this, must remember that not only *lying*, in every species of it, but even *dissimulation*, (which is not the same with lying, though nearly related to it) is displeasing to men of understanding, though they have not religion. *Terence* represents even an old Heathen, when it was imputed to him, as answering with indignation,

"*Simulare non est meum:*"

"Dissimulation is no part of my character."

Guile, subtlety, cunning, the whole art of deceiving, by whatever terms it is expressed, is not accounted an accomplishment by wise men; but is indeed an abomination to them. And even those

thoſe who practiſe it moſt, who are the greateſt artificers of fraud, are not pleaſed with it in other men, neither are fond of converſing with thoſe that practiſe it on themſelves. Yea, the greateſt deceivers are greatly diſpleaſed at thoſe that play their own arts back upon them.

II. Now if cruelty, malice, envy, hatred, revenge, ill-nature; if pride and haughtineſs; if irrational anger: if lying and diſſimulation, together with guile, ſubtlety and cunning, are all and every one diſpleaſing to all men, eſpecially to wiſe and good men, we may eaſily gather from hence, what is the ſure way to pleaſe them, for their good to edification. Only we are to remember, that there are thoſe in every time and place, whom we muſt not expect to pleaſe. We muſt not therefore be ſurpriſed, when we meet with men, who are not to be pleaſed any way. It is now as it was of old, when our Lord himſelf complained, "Whereunto ſhall I liken the men of this generation? They are like unto children ſitting in the market-place, and ſaying to each other, We have piped unto you, but ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, but ye have not wept." But leaving theſe froward ones to themſelves, we may reaſonably hope to pleaſe others, by a careful and ſteady obſervation of the few directions following.

1. Firſt, Let *love* not viſit you as a tranſient gueſt, but be the conſtant, ruling temper of your ſoul. See that your heart be filled at all times and on all occaſions, with real, undiſſembled benevolence, not to thoſe only that love *you*, but to every ſoul of man. Let it pant in your heart, let it ſparkle in your eyes, let it ſhine on all your actions.

actions. Whenever you open your lips, let it be with love, and let there be in your tongue the law of kindness. Your word will then distil as the rain, and as the dew upon the tender herb. Be not straitened or limited in your affection, but let it embrace every child of man. Every one that is born of a woman has a claim to your goodwill. You owe this not to some, but to all. And let all men know, that you desire both their temporal and eternal happiness as sincerely as you do your own.

2. Secondly, If you would please your neighbour for his good, study to be *lowly* in heart. Be little and vile in your own eyes, in honour preferring others before yourself. Be deeply sensible of your own weaknesses, follies and imperfections; as well as of the sin remaining in your heart, and cleaving to all your words and actions. And let this spirit appear in all you speak or do: *Be clothed with humility.* Reject with horror that favourite maxim of the old Heathen, sprung from the bottomless pit,

Tanti eris aliis, quanti tibi fueris;

"The more you value yourself, the more others will value you." Not so: on the contrary both God and man *resist the proud:* and as *God giveth grace to the humble*, so humility, not pride, recommends us to the esteem and favour of men, especially those that fear God.

3. If you desire to please your neighbour for his good to edification, you should thirdly, labour and pray, that you may be *meek*, as well as lowly in heart. Labour to be of a calm, dispassionate temper, *gentle* towards all men. And let the gentleness of your disposition appear in the whole

tenor

tenor of your converſation. Let all your words and all your actions be regulated thereby. Remember likewiſe that advice of St. *Peter*. As an addition to your gentleneſs, *be merciful; be courteous; be pitiful;* be tenderly compaſſionate to all that are in diſtreſs, to all that are under any affliction, of mind, body, or eſtate. Let

> "The various ſcenes of human woe
> Excite our ſofteſt ſympathy;"

Weep with them that weep. If you can do no more, at leaſt mix your tears with theirs: and give them healing words, ſuch as may calm their minds, and mitigate their ſorrows. But if you can, if you are able to give them actual aſſiſtance, let it not be wanting. Be as eyes to the blind, as feet to the lame, a huſband to the widow, and a father to the fatherleſs. This will greatly tend to conciliate the affection, and to give a profitable pleaſure, not only to thoſe who are immediate objects of your compaſſion; but to others likewiſe that "ſee your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

4. And while you are *pitiful* to the afflicted, ſee that you are *courteous* toward all men. It matters not, in this reſpect, whether they are high or low, rich or poor, ſuperior or inferior to you. No nor even whether good or bad, whether they fear God or not. Indeed the *mode* of ſhewing your courteſy may vary, as Chriſtian prudence will direct. But the thing itſelf is due to all: the loweſt and worſt have a claim to our courteſy? It may either be inward or outward: either a temper or a mode of behaviour. Such a mode of behaviour as naturally ſprings from courteſy of heart. Is this the ſame with good breeding

or

or politeneſs? (Which ſeems to be only a high degree of good breeding) nay, good breeding is chiefly the fruit of education; but education cannot give courteſy of heart. Mr. *Addiſon's* well known definition of politeneſs ſeems rather to be a definition of this, "A conſtant deſire of pleaſing all men, appearing through the whole converſation." Now this may ſubſiſt, even in a high degree, where there has been no advantage of education. I have ſeen as real courteſy in an *Iriſh* cabin, as could be found in St. *James's* or the *Louvre*.

5. Shall we endeavour to go a little deeper, to ſearch the foundation of this matter? What is the ſource of that deſire to pleaſe, which we term courteſy? Let us look attentively into our heart, and we ſhall ſoon find an anſwer. The ſame Apoſtle that teaches us to *be courteous*, teaches us to *honour all men*. And his Maſter teaches me to love all men. Join theſe together, and what will be the effect? A poor wretch cries to me for an alms: I look and ſee him covered with dirt and rags. But through theſe I ſee one that has an immortal ſpirit, made to know and love and dwell with God to eternity: I honour him for his Creator's ſake. I ſee through all theſe rags, that he is purpled over with the blood of Chriſt. I love him for the ſake of his Redeemer. The courteſy therefore which I feel and ſhew toward him, is a mixture of the honour and love, which I bear to the offspring of God, the purchaſe of his Son's blood, and the candidate for immortality. This courteſy let us feel and ſhew toward all men; and we ſhall pleaſe all men to their edification.

6. Once more. Take all proper opportunities of *declaring* to others the *affection* which you really feel for them. This may be done with such an air, and in such a manner, as is not liable to the imputation of flattery. And experience shews, that honest men are pleased by this, full as much as knaves are by flattery. Those who are persuaded that your expressions of good-will toward them are the language of your heart, will be as well satisfied with them, as with the strongest encomiums, which you could pass upon them. You may judge them by yourselves, by what you feel in your own breast. You like to be honoured: but had you not rather be beloved?

7. Permit me to add one advice more. If you would please all men for their good, at all events *speak* to all men the very *truth* from your heart. When you speak, open the window of your breast: let the words be the very picture of your heart. In all company and on all occasions, be a man of *veracity*, nay, be not content with bare veracity; but "in simplicity and godly sincerity, have all your conversation in the world, as an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile."

8. To sum up all in one word, If you would please men, please God! Let truth and love possess your whole soul. Let them be the springs of all your affections, passions, tempers; the rule of all your thoughts. Let them inspire all your discourse; continually seasoned with that salt, and *meet to minister grace to the hearers*. Let all your actions be wrought in love. Never *let mercy or truth forsake thee: bind them about thy neck*. Let them be open and conspicuous to all: and *write them on the table of thy heart. So shalt thou find favour and good understanding in the sight of God and man.*

SERMON

SERMON CIII.

The Duty of Constant Communion.

To the Reader.

The following Diſcourſe was written above five and fifty years ago, for the uſe of my Pupils at Oxford. I have added very little, but retrenched much; as I then uſed more words than I do now. But I thank God, I have not yet ſeen cauſe to alter my ſentiments, in any point which is therein delivered.

J. W.

Luke xxii. 19.

Do this in remembrance of me.

IT is no wonder that men who have no fear of God, ſhould never think of doing this. But it is ſtrange that it ſhould be neglected by any that do fear God, and deſire to ſave their ſouls: and yet nothing is more common. One reaſon

why many neglect it is, they are so much afraid of *eating and drinking unworthily*, that they never think how much greater the danger is, when they do not eat or drink it at all. That I may do what I can to bring these well-meaning men to a more just way of thinking, I shall,

First, shew that it is the duty of every Christian to receive the Lord's Supper as often as he can; and secondly, answer some objections.

I. I am to shew, that it is the duty of every Christian to receive the Lord's Supper as often as he can.

1. The first reason why it is the duty of every Christian so to do, is because it is a plain command of Christ. That this is his command, appears from the words of the text, *Do this in remembrance of me:* by which, as the Apostles were obliged to bless, break and give the bread to all that joined with them in these holy things, so were all Christians obliged to receive those signs of Christ's body and blood. Here therefore the bread and wine are commanded to be received, in remembrance of his death, to the end of the world. Observe too, that this command was given by our Lord, when he was just laying down his life for our sakes. They are therefore as it were, his dying words to all his followers.

2. A second reason why every Christian should do this, as often as he can, is because the benefits of doing it are so great, to all that do it in obedience to him; namely, the forgiveness of our past sins, the present strengthening and refreshing of our souls. In this world we are never free from temptations. Whatever way of life we are in, whatever our condition be, whether we are sick or well, in trouble or at ease, the enemies

mies of our ſouls are watching to lead us into ſin. And too often they prevail over us. Now when we are convinced of having ſinned againſt God, what ſurer way have we of procuring pardon from him, than the *ſhewing forth the Lord's death?* and beſeeching him, for the ſake of his Son's ſufferings, to blot out all our ſins?

3. The grace of God given herein, confirms to us the pardon of our ſins, and enables us to leave them. As our bodies are ſtrengthened by bread and wine, ſo are our ſouls by theſe tokens of the body and blood of Chriſt. This is the food of our ſouls: this gives ſtrength to perform our duty, and leads us on to perfection. If therefore we have any regard for the plain command of Chriſt, if we deſire the pardon of our ſins, if we wiſh for ſtrength to believe, to love and obey God, then we ſhould neglect no opportunity of receiving the Lord's Supper. Then we muſt never turn our backs on the feaſt which our Lord has prepared for us. We muſt neglect no occaſion which the good providence of God affords us for this purpoſe. This is the true rule; ſo often are we to receive, as God gives us opportunity. Whoever therefore does not receive, but goes from the holy table, when all things are prepared, either does not underſtand his duty, or does not care for the dying command of his Saviour, the forgiveneſs of his ſins, the ſtrengthening of his ſoul, and the refreſhing it with the hope of glory.

4. Let every one therefore who has either any deſire to pleaſe God, or any love of his own ſoul, obey God, and conſult the good of his own ſoul, by communicating every time he can: like

the firſt Chriſtians, with whom the Chriſtian ſacrifice was a conſtant part of the Lord's-day ſervice. And for ſeveral centuries they received it almoſt every day. Four times a week always, and every ſaint's day beſide. Accordingly thoſe that joined in the prayers of the faithful, never failed to partake of the bleſſed ſacrament. What opinion they had of any who turned his back upon it, we may learn from that ancient canon, "If any believer join in the prayers of the faithful, and go away without receiving the Lord's Supper, let him be excommunicated, as bringing confuſion into the Church of God."

5. In order to underſtand the nature of the Lord's Supper, it would be uſeful, carefully to read over thoſe paſſages in the Goſpel, and in the firſt epiſtle to the Corinthians, which ſpeak of the inſtitution of it. Hence we learn that the deſign of this ſacrament is the continual remembrance of the death of Chriſt, by eating bread and drinking wine, which are the outward ſigns of the inward grace, the body and blood of Chriſt.

6. It is highly expedient for thoſe who purpoſe to receive this, whenever their time will permit, to prepare themſelves for this ſolemn ordinance, by ſelf-examination and prayer. But this is not abſolutely neceſſary. And when we have not time for it, we ſhould ſee that we have the habitual preparation which is abſolutely neceſſary, and can never be diſpenſed with on any account, or any occaſion whatever. This is, firſt, a full *purpoſe* of heart, to keep all the commandments of God. And ſecondly, a ſincere *deſire*, to receive all his promiſes.

II. I am

II. I am in the second place, to answer the common objections against constantly receiving the Lord's Supper.

1. I say, *Constantly* receiving. For as to the phrase of *frequent* communion it is absurd to the last degree. If it means any thing less than constant, it means more than can be proved to be the duty of any man. For if we are not obliged to communicate *constantly*, by what argument can it be proved, that we are obliged to communicate *frequently?* Yea, more than once a year, or once in seven years? or once before we die? Every argument brought for this, either proves that we ought to do it *constantly*, or proves nothing at all. Therefore that indeterminate, unmeaning way of speaking, ought to be laid aside by all men of understanding.

2. In order to prove that it is our duty to communicate constantly, we may observe that the holy communion is to be considered either, 1. As a command of God, or 2. As a mercy to man.

First, As a command of God. God our mediator and governor, from whom we have received our life and all things, on whose will it depends, whether we shall be perfectly happy or perfectly miserable from this moment to eternity, declares to us, that all who obey his commands, shall be eternally happy; all who do not shall be eternally miserable. Now one of these commands is, "*Do this in remembrance of me.*" I ask then, Why do ye not do this, when you can do it if you will? When you have an opportunity before you, why do not you obey the command of God?

3. Perhaps

3. Perhaps you will say, "God does not command me to do this *as often as I can*: that is, the words, "as often as you can," are not added in this particular place. What then? Are we not to obey every command of God, as often as we can? Are not all the promises of God made to those, and those only, who *give all diligence*; that is, to those, who do all they can, to obey his commandments? Our power is the one rule of our duty. Whatever we can do, that we ought. With respect either to this or any other command, he that, when he may obey if he will, does not, will have no place in the kingdom of heaven.

4. And this great truth, that we are obliged to keep every command as far as we can, is clearly proved from the absurdity of the contrary opinion: for were we to allow that we are not obliged to obey every commandment of God as often as we can, we have no argument left to prove that any man is bound to obey any command at any time. For instance. Should I ask a man, Why he does not obey one of the plainest commands of God? Why, for instance, he does not help his parents? He might answer, "I will not do it now; but I will at another time." When that time comes, put him in mind of God's command again: and he will say, "I will obey it some time or other." Nor is it possible ever to prove, that he ought to do it now, unless by proving that he ought to do it as often as he can: and therefore he ought to do it now, because he can if he will.

5. Consider the Lord's Supper, Secondly, as a mercy from God to man. As God, whose mercy is over all his works, and particularly over the

the children of men, knew there was but one way for man to be happy like himſelf, namely, by being like him in holineſs: as he knew we could do nothing towards this of ourſelves, he has given us certain means of obtaining his help. One of theſe is the Lord's Supper, which of his infinite mercy he hath given for this very end, that through this means we may be aſſiſted to attain thoſe bleſſings which he hath prepared for us; that we may obtain holineſs on earth and everlaſting glory in heaven.

I aſk then, Why do you not accept of this mercy as often as ever you can? God now offers you his bleſſing: why do you refuſe it? You have now an opportuuity of receiving his mercy; why do you not receive it? You are weak: why do not you ſeize upon every opportunity of increaſing your ſtrength? In a word, conſidering this as a command of God, he that does not communicate as often as he can, has no piety: conſidering it as a mercy, he that does not communicate as often as he can, has no wiſdom.

6. Theſe two conſiderations will yield a full anſwer to all the common objections, which have been made againſt conſtant communion: indeed to all that ever were or can be made. In truth nothing can be objected againſt it, but upon ſuppoſition, that this particular time, either the communion would be no mercy, or I am not commanded to receive it. Nay, ſhould we grant it would be no mercy, that is not enough: for ſtill the other reaſon would hold: whether it does you any good or none, you are to obey the command of God.

7. However let us ſee the particular excuſes, which men commonly make for not obeying it.

The

The moſt common is, "I am *unworthy*; and 'he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himſelf.' Therefore I dare not communicate, leaſt I ſhould eat and drink my own damnation."

The caſe is this. God offers you one of the greateſt mercies on this ſide heaven, and commands you to accept it. Why do not you accept this mercy, in obedience to his command? You ſay, "I am unworthy to receive it." And what then? You are unworthy to receive any mercy from God. But is that a reaſon for refuſing all mercy? God offers you a pardon for all your ſins. You are unworthy of it, it is ſure, and he knows it: but ſince he is pleaſed to offer it nevertheleſs, will not you accept of it? He offers to deliver your ſoul from death. You are unworthy to live. But will you therefore refuſe life? He offers to endue your ſoul with new ſtrength: becauſe you are unworthy of it, will you deny to take it? What can God himſelf do for us farther, if we refuſe his mercy becauſe we are unworthy of it?

8. But ſuppoſe this were no mercy to us (to ſuppoſe which is indeed giving God the lie; ſaying, That is not good for man, which he purpoſely ordered for his good:) ſtill I aſk, Why do not you obey God's command? He ſays, "Do this." Why do you not? You anſwer, "I am unworthy to do it." What! Unworthy to obey God? Unworthy to do what God bids you do? Unworthy to obey God's command? What do you mean by this? That thoſe who are unworthy to obey God, ought not to obey him? Who told you ſo? If he were even "an angel from heaven, let him be accurſed." If you think God himſelf has told you by St. *Paul*, let us hear his

his words. They are these, "He that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself."

Why, this is quite another thing. Here is not a word said of *being unworthy* to eat and drink. Indeed he does speak of eating and drinking *unworthily:* but that is quite a different thing: so he has told us himself. In this very chapter we are told that by eating and drinking unworthily is meant, Taking the holy sacrament in such a rude and disorderly way, that one was *hungry, and another drunken.* But what is that to *you?* Is there any danger of *your* doing so? Of your eating and drinking *thus unworthily?* However unworthy you are to communicate, there is no fear of your communicating thus. Therefore whatever the punishment is of doing it thus unworthily, it does not concern *you.* You have no more reason from this text to disobey God, than if there was no such text in the Bible. If you speak of "eating and drinking unworthily" in the sense St. *Paul* uses the words, you may as well say, "I dare not communicate *for fear the church should fall,* as for fear I should *eat and drink unworthily.*"

9. If then you fear bringing *damnation* on yourself by this, you fear where no fear is. Fear it not, for eating and drinking unworthily; for that in St. *Paul's* sense, ye cannot do. But I will tell you for what you shall fear damnation: for not eating and drinking at all: for not obeying your Maker and Redeemer: for disobeying his plain command: for thus setting at nought both his mercy and authority. Fear ye this: for hear what his Apostle saith, "Whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, is guilty of all," James ii. 10.

10. We

10. We see then how weak the objection is, "I dare not receive, * because I am unworthy." Nor is it any stronger, though the reason why you think yourself unworthy is, that you have lately fallen into sin. It is true, our Church forbids those "who have done any grievous crime," to receive without repentance. But all that follows from this is, That we should repent before we come; not that we should neglect to come at all.

To say therefore, that "a man may turn his back upon the Altar, because he has lately fallen into sin: that he may impose this penance upon himself," is talking without any warrant from Scripture. For where does the Bible teach, to atone for breaking one commandment of God, by breaking another? What advice is this, "commit a new act of disobedience, and God will more easily forgive the past!"

11. Others there are, who to excuse their disobedience plead, that they are unworthy in another sense: that they "cannot live up to it; they cannot pretend to lead so holy a life, as constantly communicating would oblige them to do." Put this into plain words. I ask, Why do not you accept the mercy which God commands you to accept? You answer, "Because I cannot live up to the profession I must make when I receive it." Then it is plain you ought never to receive it at all. For it is no more lawful to promise once what you know you cannot perform, than to promise it a thousand times. You know too, that it is one and the same promise, whether you make it every year or every day. You promise to do just

* The Lord's Supper.

juſt as much, whether you promiſe ever ſo often or ever ſo ſeldom.

If therefore you cannot live up to the profeſſion they make who communicate once a week, neither can you come up to the profeſſion you make, who communicate once a year. But cannot you indeed? Then it had been good for you that you had never been born. For all that you profeſs at the Lord's table, you muſt both profeſs and keep, or you cannot be ſaved. For you profeſs nothing but this, That you will diligently keep his commandments. And cannot you keep up to this profeſſion? Then you cannot enter into life.

12. Think then what you ſay, before you ſay, "You cannot live up to what is required of conſtant communicants." This is no more than is required of any communicants, yea, of every one that has a ſoul to be ſaved. So that to ſay "You cannot live up to this," is neither better nor worſe than renouncing Chriſtianity. It is in effect renouncing your baptiſm, wherein you ſolemnly promiſed, to keep all his commandments. You now fly from that profeſſion. You wilfully break one of his commandments, and to excuſe yourſelf ſay you cannot keep his commandments! Then you cannot expect to receive the promiſes, which are made only to thoſe that keep them.

13. What has been ſaid on this pretence againſt conſtant communion, is applicable to thoſe who ſay the ſame thing in other words, "We dare not do it becauſe it requires ſo perfect an obedience afterwards, as we cannot promiſe to perform." Nay it requires neither more nor leſs perfect obedience, than you promiſed in your baptiſm. You then undertook to keep the commandments of

God by his help: and you promiſe no more when you communicate.

14. A ſecond objection which is often made againſt conſtant communion, is the having ſo much buſineſs, as will not allow time for ſuch a preparation as is neceſſary thereto. I anſwer, All the preparation that is abſolutely neceſſary, is contained in thoſe words, "Repent you truly of your ſins paſt; have faith in Chriſt our Saviour. (And obſerve, that word is not taken in its higheſt ſenſe!) Amend your lives, and be in charity with all men: ſo ſhall ye be meet partakers of theſe holy myſteries." All who are thus prepared, may draw near without fear, and receive the ſacrament to their comfort. Now what buſineſs can hinder you from being thus prepared? From repenting of your paſt ſins? From believing that Chriſt died to ſave ſinners? From amending your lives, and being in charity with all men? No buſineſs can hinder you from this, unleſs it be ſuch as hinders you from being in a ſtate of ſalvation. If you reſolve and deſign to follow Chriſt, you are fit to approach the Lord's table. If you do not deſign this, you are only fit for the table and company of devils.

15. No buſineſs therefore can hinder any man from having that preparation which alone is neceſſary, unleſs it be ſuch as unprepares him for heaven, as puts him out of a ſtate of ſalvation. Indeed every prudent man will, when he has time, examine himſelf, before he receives the Lord's Supper. Whether he repents him truly of his former ſins, whether he believes the promiſes of God, whether he fully deſigns to walk in his ways, and be in charity with all men? In this, and in private prayer he will doubtleſs ſpend all

all the time he conveniently can. But what is this to *you* who have not time? What excuſe is this, for not obeying God? He commands you to come, and prepare yourſelf by prayer, if you have time; if you have not, however come. Make not reverence to God's command, a pretence for breaking it. Do not rebel againſt him, for fear of offending him. Whatever you do, or leave undone beſides, be ſure to do what God bids you do. Examining yourſelf, and uſing private prayer, eſpecially before the Lord's Supper, is good. But, behold! *To obey is better than* ſelf-examination, *and to hearken*, than the prayer of an angel.

16. A third objection againſt conſtant communion is, That it abates our reverence for the ſacrament. Suppoſe it did? What then! Will you thence conclude, that you are not to receive it conſtantly? This does not follow. God commands you, "Do this." You may do it now, but will not: and to excuſe yourſelf ſay, "If I do it ſo often, it will abate the reverence with which I do it now." Suppoſe it did: has God ever told you, That when the obeying his command abates your reverence to it, then you may diſobey it? If he has, you are guiltleſs; if not, what you ſay is juſt nothing to the purpoſe. The law is clear. Either ſhew that the lawgiver makes this exception, or you are guilty before him.

17. Reverence for the ſacrament may be of two ſorts: either ſuch as is owing purely to the newneſs of the thing, ſuch as men naturally have for any thing they are not uſed to: or ſuch as is owing to our faith, or to the love or fear of God. Now the former of theſe is not properly a religious reverence, but purely natural. And this ſort

of reverence for the Lord's Supper, the conſtantly receiving of it muſt leſſen. But it will not leſſen the true religious reverence, but rather confirm and increaſe it.

18. A fourth objection is, "I have communicated conſtantly ſo long: but I have not found the benefit I expected." This has been the caſe with many well meaning perſons, and therefore deſerves to be particularly conſidered. And conſider this firſt. Whatever God commands us to do, we are to do, becauſe he commands, whether we feel any benefit thereby or no. Now God commands, *Do this in remembrance of me.* This therefore we are to do, becauſe he commands; whether we find preſent benefit thereby or not. But undoubtedly we ſhall find benefit ſooner or later, though perhaps inſenſibly. We ſhall be inſenſibly ſtrengthened, made more fit for the ſervice of God, and more conſtant in it. At leaſt we are kept from falling back, and preſerved from many ſins and temptations: and ſurely this ſhould be enough to make us receive this food as often as we can: though we do not preſently feel the happy effects of it, as ſome have done, and we ourſelves may, when God ſees beſt.

19. But ſuppoſe a man has often been at the ſacrament, and yet received no benefit. Was it not his own fault? Either he was not rightly prepared, willing to obey all the commands, and to receive all the promiſes of God: or he did not receive it aright, truſting in God. Only ſee that you are duly prepared for it, and the oftener you come to the Lord's table, the greater benefit you will find there.

20. A fifth objection which ſome have made againſt conſtant communion is, That "the Church enjoins

enjoins it only three times a year." The words of the Church are; "Note that every Parishoner shall communicate at the least three times in the year." To this I answer, first, What if the Church had not enjoined it at all, is it not enough, that God enjoins it? We obey the Church only for God's sake. And shall we not obey God himself? If then, you receive three times a year, because the Church commands it, receive every time you can, because God commands it. Else your doing the one will be so far from excusing you for not doing the other, that your own practice will prove your folly and sin, and leave you without excuse.

But, Secondly, We cannot conclude from these words that the Church excuses him who receives only thrice a year. The plain sense of them is, That he who does not receive thrice at least, shall be cast out of the Church: but they by no means excuse him, who communicates no oftener. This never was the judgment of our Church: on the contrary, she takes all possible care that the sacrament be duly administered, wherever the common prayer is read, every Sunday and holiday in the year.

The Church gives a particular direction with regard to those that are in holy Orders. "In all Cathedral and Collegiate Churches and Colleges, where there are many Priests and Deacons, they shall all receive the communion with the Priest, every Sunday at the least."

21. It has been shewn, first, That if we consider the Lord's Supper as a command of Christ, no man can have any pretence to Christian piety, who does not receive it, (not once a month, but) as often as he can: Secondly, That if we consider

the inſtitution of it, as a mercy to ourſelves, no man who does not receive it as often as he can, has any pretence to Chriſtian prudence: Thirdly, that none of the objections uſually made, can be any excuſe for that man, who does not at every opportunity obey this command and accept this mercy.

22. It has been particularly ſhewn, firſt, That unworthineſs is no excuſe: becauſe though in one ſenſe we are all unworthy, yet none of us need be afraid of being unworthy in St. *Paul's* ſenſe; of *eating and drinking unworthily*: Secondly, That the not having time enough for preparation, can be no excuſe: ſince the only preparation which is abſolutely neceſſary, is that which no buſineſs can hinder; nor indeed any thing on earth, unleſs ſo far as it hinders our being in a ſtate of ſalvation: Thirdly, That its abating our reverence is no excuſe: ſince he who gave the command, "Do this," no where adds, "Unleſs it abates your reverence;" Fourthly, That our not profiting by it is no excuſe, ſince it is our own fault, in neglecting that neceſſary preparation, which is in our own power. Laſtly, That the judgment of our own Church is quite in favour of conſtant communion. If thoſe who have hitherto neglected it on any of theſe pretences, will lay theſe things to heart, they will by the grace of God, come to a better mind, and never more forſake their own mercies.

SERMON

SERMON CIV.

ON FORMER TIMES.

ECCLESIASTES vii. 10.

Say not thou, What is the cauſe, that the former days were better than theſe? For thou doſt not enquire wiſely concerning this.

1. IT is not eaſy to diſcern any connexion between this text and the context: between theſe words and either thoſe that go before, or thoſe that follow after. It ſeems to be a detached, independent ſentence, like very many in the *Proverbs* of *Solomon*. And like them, it contains a weighty truth, which deſerves a ſerious conſideration. Is not the purport of the queſtion this? It is not wiſe, to enquire into the cauſe of a ſuppoſition, unleſs the ſuppoſition itſelf be not only true, but clearly proved ſo to be. There-

fore

fore it is not wiſe to enquire into the cauſe of this ſuppoſition. That *the former days were better than theſe:* becauſe, common as it is, it was never yet proved, nor indeed ever can be.

2. Perhaps there are few ſuppoſitions which have paſſed more currently in the world than this, That the former days were better than theſe; and that in ſeveral reſpects. It is generally ſuppoſed, that we now live in the dregs of time, when the world is as it were grown old, and conſequently, that every thing in it is in a declining ſtate. It is ſuppoſed, in particular, that men were ſome ages ago, of a far taller ſtature than now: that they likewiſe had far greater abilities, and enjoyed a deeper and ſtronger underſtanding: in conſequence of which their writings of every kind are far preferable to thoſe of later times. Above all, it is ſuppoſed, that the former generations of men excelled the preſent in virtue: that mankind in every age, and in every nation have degenerated more and more: ſo that at length they have fallen from the golden, into the iron age, and now juſtice is fled from the earth.

3. Before we conſider the truth of theſe ſuppoſitions, let us enquire into the riſe of them. And as to the general ſuppoſition, That the world was once in a far more excellent ſtate than it is may we not eaſily believe, that this aroſe (as did all the fabulous accounts of the golden age) from ſome confuſed traditions concerning our firſt parents and their paradiſiacal ſtate? To this refer many of the fragments of ancient writings, which men of learning have gleaned up. Therefore we may allow, that there is ſome truth in the ſuppoſition: ſeeing it is certain, the days which *Adam* and *Eve* ſpent in Paradiſe, were far better than

than any, which have been ſpent by their deſcendents or ever will be, till Chriſt returns to reign upon earth.

4. But whence could that ſuppoſition ariſe, That men were formerly of a larger ſtature than they are now? This has been a generally prevailing opinion, almoſt in all nations and in all ages. Hence near two thouſand years ago, the well-known line of *Virgil*.

Qualia nunc hominum producit corpora tellus.

Hence near a thouſand years before him, *Homer* tells us of one of his Heroes throwing a ſtone, which hardly ten men could lift. Οἷοι νῦν βροτοὶ *Such as men are now.* We allow indeed there have been giants in all ages, in various parts of the world. Whether the Antediluvians mentioned in *Geneſis* were ſuch or no, (which many have queſtioned) we cannot doubt but *Og* the King of *Baſan* was ſuch, as well as *Goliath* of *Gath*. Such alſo were many of the children (or deſcendents) of *Anak*. But it does not appear, that in any age or nation men in general were larger than they are now. We are very ſure, they were not for many centuries paſt, by the tombs and coffins that have been diſcovered, which are exactly of the ſame ſize, with thoſe that are now in uſe. And in the Catacombs at *Rome*, the niches for the dead bodies which were hewn in the rock ſixteen hundred years ago, are none of them ſix feet in length, and ſome a little under. Above all, the Pyramids of *Egypt* (that of King *Cheops* in particular) have beyond all reaſonable doubt remained, at leaſt three thouſand years. Yet none of the Mummies (embalmed bodies) brought therefrom, are above five feet ten inches long.

5. But

5. But how then came this ſuppoſition to prevail ſo long and ſo generally in the world? I know not but it may be accounted for from hence. Great and little are relative terms, and all men judge of greatneſs and littleneſs, by comparing things with themſelves. Therefore it is not ſtrange, if we think men are larger now, than they were when we were children. I remember a remarkable inſtance of this, in my own caſe. After having left it ſeven years, I had a great deſire to ſee the ſchool where I was brought up. When I was there, I wondered that the boys were ſo much ſmaller than they uſed to be when I was at ſchool. "Many of my ſchool-fellows ten years ago were taller by the head than me. And few of them that are at ſchool now, reach up to my ſhoulders." Very true; but what was the reaſon of this? Indeed a very plain one: it was not becauſe they were ſmaller, but becauſe I was bigger than I was ten years before. I verily believe this is the cauſe, why men in general ſuppoſe the human race do decreaſe in ſtature. They remember the time when moſt of thoſe round about them were both taller and bigger than themſelves. Yea, and all men have done the ſame in their ſucceſſive generations. Is it any wonder then, that all ſhould have run into the ſame miſtake? When it has been tranſmitted unawares from father to ſon, and probably will be, to the end of time.

6. But there is likewiſe a general ſuppoſition, that the underſtanding of man, and all his mental abilities, were of a larger ſize in the ancient days than they are now: and that the ancient inhabitants of the earth had far greater talents than the preſent. Men of eminent learning have been of this

this mind, and have contended for it with the utmoſt vehemence. It is granted, that many of the ancient Writers, both Philoſophers, Poets and Hiſtorians, will not eaſily be excelled, if equalled, by thoſe of later ages. We may inſtance in *Homer* and *Virgil*, as Poets, *Thucydides* and *Livy* as Hiſtorians. But, this mean time is to be remarked, concerning moſt of theſe Writers, that each of them ſpent his whole life in compoſing and poliſhing one book. What wonder then if they were exquiſitely finiſhed, when ſo much labour was beſtowed upon them? I doubt, whether any man in *Europe* or in the world, has taken ſo much pains in finiſhing any treatiſe. Otherwiſe it might poſſibly have equalled, if not excelled, any that went before.

7. But that the generality of men were not one jot wiſer in ancient times, than they are at the preſent time, we may eaſily gather from the moſt authentic records. One of the moſt ancient nations, concerning whom we have any certain account, is the *Egyptian*. And what conception can we have of their underſtanding and learning, when we reflect upon the objects of their worſhip? Theſe were not only the vileſt of animals, as dogs and cats, but the leeks and onions that grew in their own gardens. Indeed we lately had a great man (whoſe manner was to treat with the fouleſt abuſe, all that dared to differ from him: I do not mean Dr. *Johnſon*: he was a mere Courtier, compared to Mr. *Hutchinſon*) who ſcurrilouſly abuſed all thoſe who are ſo void of common ſenſe as to believe any ſuch thing concerning them. He peremptorily affirms, (but without condeſcending to give us any proof,) That the ancient inhabitants of *Egypt* had a deep hidden

hidden meaning in all this. Let him believe it who can. I cannot believe it, on any man's bare aſſertion. I believe they had no deeper meaning in worſhipping cats, than our ſchool-boys have in baiting them. And I apprehend, the common *Egyptians* were juſt as wiſe three thouſand years ago, as the common ploughmen in *England* and *Wales* are at this day. I ſuppoſe their natural underſtanding, like their ſtature, was on a level with ours, and their learning, their acquired knowledge many degrees inferior, to that of perſons of the ſame rank, either in *France*, *Holland* or *Germany*.

8. "However, did not the people of former times, greatly excel us in virtue?" This is the point of greateſt importance: the reſt are but trifles in compariſon of it. Now is it not univerſally allowed, that every age grows worſe and worſe? Was it not obſerved by the old Heathen Poet, almoſt two thouſand years ago,

Ætas parentum, pejor avis tulit
Nos nequiores, jam daturos
Progeniem vitioſiorem.

That is, in plain proſe, "The age of our parents was more vicious than that of our grandfathers. Our age is more vicious than that of our fathers. We are worſe than our fathers were, and our children will be worſe than us."

9. It is certain, this has been the common cry, from generation to generation. And if it is not true, whence ſhould it ariſe? How can we account for it? Perhaps another remark of the ſame Poet may help us to an anſwer. May it not be extracted from the general character which he gives of old men?

Difficilis,

Difficilis, querulus, laudator temporis acti
Se puero, cenſor, caſtigatorq: minorum.

Is it not the common practice of the old men, to praiſe the paſt and condemn the preſent time? And this may probably operate much farther, than one would at firſt imagine. When thoſe that have more experience than us, and therefore, we are apt to think more wiſdom, are almoſt continually harping upon this, the degeneracy of the world; thoſe who are accuſtomed from their infancy to hear, how much better the world was formerly than it is now, (and ſo it really ſeemed to them, when they were young, and juſt come into the world, and when the cheerfulneſs of youth gave a pleaſing air to all that was round about them) the idea of the world's being worſe and worſe, would naturally grow up with them. And ſo it will be, till we, in our turn, grew peeviſh, fretful, diſcontented, and full of melancholy complaints, "How wicked the world is grown!" How much better it was, when we were young, in the golden days that we can remember!

10. But let us endeavour, without prejudice or prepoſſeſſion, to take a view of the whole affair. And upon cool and impartial conſideration, it will appear that the former days were not better than theſe: yea, on the contrary, that theſe are in many reſpects, beyond compariſon better than them. It will nearly appear, that as the ſtature of men was nearly the ſame from the beginning of the world, ſo the underſtanding of men, in ſimilar circumſtances, has been much the ſame, from the time of God's bringing a flood upon the earth, unto the preſent hour. We have

no reason to believe that the uncivilized nations of *Africa*, *America*, or the *South-Sea* Islands, had ever a better understanding, or were in a less barbarous state than they are now. Neither on the other hand, have we any sufficient proof, that the natural understanding of men in the most civilized countries, *Babylon*, *Persia*, *Greece*, or *Italy*, were stronger or more improved, than those of the *Germans*, *French*, or *English* now alive. Nay, have we not reason to believe, that by means of better instruments we have attained that knowledge of nature, which few, if any of the Ancients ever atained. So that in this respect, the advantage, (and not a little one) is clearly on our side: and we ought to acknowledge with deep thankfulness to the Giver of every good gift, That the former days were not to be compared to these wherein we live.

11. But the principal enquiry still remains. Were not "the former days better than these," with regard to virtue? or to speak more properly, religion? This deserves a full consideration.

By religion I mean, The love of God and man, filling the heart and governing the life. The sure effect of this is, the uniform practice of justice, mercy and truth. This is the very essence of it, the height and depth of religion, detached from this or that opinion, and from all particular modes of worship. And I would calmly enquire, Which of the former times were better than these, with regard to this? to the religion experienced and practised by Archbishop *Fenelon*, in *France*, Bishop *Kenn*, in *England*, and Bishop *Bedell*, in *Ireland*?

12. We

12. We need not extend our enquiry beyond the period when life and immortality were brought to light by the Gospel. And it is allowed, that the days immediately succeeding the pouring out of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, were better even in this respect, even with regard to religion, than any which have succeeded them.

But setting aside this short age of golden days, I must repeat the question, Which of the former days were better than the present, in every known part of the habitable world?

13. Was the former part of this century better either in these islands or any part of the Continent? I know no reason at all to affirm this. I believe every part of *Europe* was full as void of religion in the reign of Queen *Anne*, as it is at this day. It true, luxury increases to a high degree, in every part of *Europe*. And so does the scandal of *England*, profaneness in every part of the kingdom. But it is also true, that the most infernal of all vices, cruelty, does as swiftly decrease. And such instances of it as in times past continually occurred, are now very seldom heard of. Even in war, that savage barbarity which was every where practised, has been discontinued for many years.

14. Was the last century more religious than this? In the former part of it there was much of the form of religion. And some undoubtedly experienced the power thereof. But how soon did the fine gold become dim! How soon was it so mingled with worldly design, and with a total contempt both of truth, justice and mercy, as brought that scandal upon all religion, which is hardly removed to this day. Was there more true religion in the preceding century, the age of

the reformation? There was doubtleſs in many countries a conſiderable reformation of religious opinions: yea, and modes of worſhip, which were much changed for the better, both in *Germany* and ſeveral other places. But it is well known, that *Luther* himſelf complained with his dying breath, "The people that are called by my name (though I wiſh they were called by the name of Chriſt) are reformed as to their opinions and modes of worſhip; but their tempers and lives are the ſame they were before." Even then both juſtice and mercy were ſo ſhameleſsly trodden under foot, that an eminent writer computes the number of thoſe that were ſlaughtered, during thoſe religious conteſts, to have been no leſs than forty millions, within the compaſs of forty years!

15. We may ſtep back above a thouſand years from this, without finding any better time. No Hiſtorian gives us the leaſt intimation of any ſuch, till we come to the age of *Conſtantine* the *Great*. Of this period ſeveral writers have given us moſt magnificent accounts. Yea, one eminent Author, no leſs a man than Dr. *Newton*, the late Biſhop of *Briſtol*, has been at no ſmall pains to ſhew that the converſion of *Conſtantine* to Chriſtianity, and the emoluments which he beſtowed upon the Church with an unſparing hand, were the event which is ſignified in the Revelation, by "the new Jeruſalem coming down from heaven!"

16. But I cannot in anywiſe ſubſcribe to the Biſhop's opinion in this matter. So far from it, that I have been long convinced from the whole tenor of ancient Hiſtory, that this very event, *Conſtantine's* calling himſelf a Chriſtian, and pouring that flood of wealth and honour on the Chriſtian

Chriſtian Church, the Clergy in particular, was productive of more evil to the Church, than all the ten perſecutions put together. From the time that power, riches and honour of all kinds, were heaped upon the Chriſtians, vice of all kinds came in like a flood, both on the Clergy and Laity. From the time that the Church and State, the kingdoms of Chriſt and of the world, were ſo ſtrangely and unnaturally blended together, Chriſtianity and Heatheniſm were ſo thoroughly incorporated with each other, that they will hardly ever be divided, till Chriſt comes to reign upon earth. So that inſtead of fancying, that the glory of the New Jeruſalem covered the earth at that period, we have terrible proof that it was then, and has ever ſince been covered with the ſmoke of the bottomleſs pit.

17. "However were not the days antecedent to this, thoſe of the third century, better beyond all compariſon, than any that followed them?" This has been almoſt univerſally believed. Few doubt but in the age before *Conſtantine*, the Chriſtian Church was in its glory, worſhipping God in the beauty of holineſs. But was it ſo indeed? What ſays St. *Cyprian*, who lived in the midſt of that century, a witneſs above all exception, and one that ſealed the truth with his blood? What account does he give, of what he ſaw with his own eyes, and heard with his own ears? Such a one as would almoſt make one imagine he was painting to the life, not the ancient Church of *Carthage*, but the modern Church of *Rome*. According to his account, ſuch abominations even then prevailed over all orders of men, that it was not ſtrange God poured out his fury upon them in blood, by the grievous perſecutions which followed.

18. Yea, and before this, even in the first century, even in the Apostolic age, what account does St. *John* give of several of the Churches, which he himself had planted in *Asia?* How little were those congregations better than many in *Europe*, at this day? Nay, forty or fifty years before that, within thirty years of the descent of the Holy Ghost, were there not such abominations in the church of *Corinth*, as were "not even named among the heathens?" So early did the *mystery of iniquity* begin to work in the Christian Church! So little reason have we to appeal to the former days, as though they were *better than these?*

19. To affirm this therefore, as commonly as it is done, is not only contrary to truth, but is an instance of black ingratitude to God, and a grievous affront to his blessed Spirit. For whoever makes a fair and candid enquiry, will easily perceive, that true religion has in nowise decreased, but greatly increased in the present century. To instance in one capital branch of religion, the love of our neighbour. Is not persecution well nigh vanished from the face of the earth? In what age did Christians of every denomination shew such forbearance to each other? When before was such lenity shewn by governors toward their respective subjects? Not only in *Great Britain* and *Ireland;* but in *France* and *Germany*, yea, every part of *Europe?* Nothing like this has been seen since the time of *Constantine;* no, not since the time of the Apostles.

20. If it be said, "Why this is the fruit of the general infidelity, the Deism which has overspread all *Europe:*" I answer, whatever be the cause, we have reason greatly to rejoice in the effect.

effect. And if the all-wise God has brought so great and universal a good, out of this dreadful evil, so much the more should we magnify his astonishing power, wisdom, and goodness herein. Indeed so far as we can judge, this was the most direct way, whereby *nominal* Christians could be prepared, first for tolerating, and afterwards for receiving *real* Christianity. While the Governors were themselves unacquainted with it, nothing but this could induce them to suffer it. O the depth both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! Causing a total disregard for all religion, to pave the way for the revival of the only religion which was worthy of God! I am not assured whether this be the case or no, in *France* and *Germany*. But it is so, beyond all contradiction in *North America*; the total indifference of the government there, whether there be any religion or none, leaves room for the propagation of true scriptural religion, without the least let or hinderance.

21. But above all this, while luxury and profaneness have been increasing on the one hand, on the other, benevolence and compassion toward all the forms of human woe, have increased in a manner not known before, from the earliest ages of the world. In proof of this, we see more Hospitals, Infirmaries, and other places of public charity, have been erected, at least in and near *London*, within this century, than in five hundred years before. And suppose this has been owing in part to vanity, desire of praise, yet have we cause to bless God, that so much good has sprung even from this imperfect motive.

22. I cannot forbear mentioning one instance more, of the goodness of God to us in the present age.

age. He has lifted up his ſtandard in our Iſland, both againſt luxury, profaneneſs, and vice of every kind. He cauſed near fifty years ago, as it were a grain of muſtard-ſeed to be ſown near *London*, and it has now grown and put forth great branches, reaching from ſea to ſea. Two or three poor people met together, in order to help each other to be real Chriſtians. They increaſed to hundreds, to thouſands, to myriads, ſtill purſuing their one point, real religion, the love of God and man, ruling all their tempers, and words and actions. Now I will be bold to ſay, ſuch an event as this, conſidered in all its circumſtances, has not been ſeen upon earth before, ſince the time that St. *John* went to *Abraham's* boſom.

23. Shall we now ſay, "The former days were better than theſe?" God forbid we ſhould be ſo unwiſe and ſo unthankful. Nay, rather let us praiſe him all the day long; for he hath dealt bountifully with us. No *former time* ſince the Apoſtles left the earth, has been *better than the preſent*. None has been comparable to it in ſeveral reſpects. We are not born out of due time, but in the day of his power, a day of glorious ſalvation, wherein he is haſtening to renew the whole race of mankind in righteouſneſs and true holineſs. How bright hath the ſun of righteouſneſs already ſhone on various parts of the earth! And how many gracious ſhowers has he already poured down upon his inheritance? How many precious ſouls has he already gathered into his garner, as ripe ſhocks of corn! May we be always ready to follow them, crying in our hearts, "Come, Lord Jeſus! Come quickly!"

SERMON

SERMON CV.

WHAT IS MAN?

PSALM viii. 3, 4.

When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and stars, which thou hast ordained: What is man?

HOW often has it been observed, That the Book of Psalms, is a rich treasury of devotion, which the wisdom of God has provided to supply the wants of his children in all generations? In all ages the Psalms have been of singular use, to those that loved or feared God. Not only to the pious *Israelites*, but to the children of God in all nations. And this book has been of sovereign use to the Church of God, not only while it was in its state of infancy (so beautifully described by St. *Paul* in the former part of the fourth chapter to the *Galatians*) but also since, in the fulness of time, "life and immortality were brought

brought to light by the gospel." The Christians in every age and nation, have availed themselves of this divine treasure, which has richly supplied the wants, not only of *babes in Christ*, of those who were just setting out in the ways of God, but of those also who had made good progress therein, yea of such as were swiftly advancing, toward "the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

The subject of this Psalm is beautifully proposed in the beginning of it, "O Lord, our Governor, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! who hast set thy glory above the heavens!" It celebrates the glorious wisdom and love of God, as the Creator and Governor of all things. It is not an improbable conjecture, that *David* wrote this Psalm in a bright star-light night, while he observed the moon also *walking in her brightness*: that while he surveyed

> "This fair half-round, the ample azure sky,
> Terribly large, and beautifully bright,
> With stars unnumber'd and unmeasur'd light,"

he broke out, from the fulness of his heart, into that natural exultation. "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained, What is man!" How is it possible that the Creator of these, the innumerable armies of heaven and earth, should have any regard to this speck of creation, whose time *passeth away like a shadow!*

> "Thy frame but dust thy stature but a span,
> A moment thy duration, foolish man!"

What is man? I would consider this, first, with regard

regard to his magnitude, and ſecondly, with regard to his duration.

I. 1. Conſider we, firſt, What is man, with regard to his magnitude. And in this reſpect, what is any one individual, compared to all the inhabitants of *Great Britain?* He ſhrinks into nothing in the comparison. How inconceivably little is one, compared to eight or ten millions of people? Is he not

"Loſt like a drop in the unbounded main?"

2. But what are all the inhabitants of *Great-Britain*, compared to all the inhabitants of the earth? Theſe have frequently been ſuppoſed to amount to about four hundred millions. But will this computation be allowed to be juſt, by thoſe who maintain *China* alone to contain fifty-eight millions? If it be true, that this one empire contains little leſs than ſixty millions, we may eaſily ſuppoſe, that the inhabitants of the whole terraqueous globe amount to four thouſand millions of inhabitants, rather than four hundred. And what is any ſingle individual, in compariſon of this number?

3. But what is the magnitude of the earth itſelf, compared to that of the Solar Syſtem. Including beſide that vaſt body the Sun, ſo immenſely larger than the Earth, the whole train of primary and ſecondary Planets: ſeveral of which (I mean of the ſecondary Planets; ſuppoſe the ſatelites or Moons of Jupiter and Saturn) abundantly larger than the whole Earth.

4. And yet what is the whole quantity of matter contained in the Sun and all thoſe primary and ſecondary Planets with all the ſpaces compriſed

ſed in the Solar Syſtem, in compariſon of that which is pervaded by thoſe amazing bodies, the Comets? Who but the Creator himſelf can *tell the number of* theſe, and *call them all by their names?* Yet what is even the orbit of a Comet, and the ſpace contained therein, to the ſpace which is occupied by the fixt Stars? which are at ſo immenſe a diſtance from the Earth, that they appear when they are viewed through the largeſt teleſcope, juſt as they do to the naked eye.

5. Whether the bounds of the Creation do or do not extend, beyond the region of the fixt ſtars, who can tell? only *the morning ſtars*, who *ſang together*, when the foundations thereof were laid. But that it is finite, that the bounds of it are fixt, we have no reaſon to doubt. We cannot doubt, but when the Son of God had finiſhed all the work which he created and made, he ſaid,

"Theſe be thy bounds!
This be thy juſt circumference, O world!"

But what is man to this?

6. We may take one ſtep, and only one ſtep farther ſtill. What is the ſpace of the whole creation, what is all finite ſpace, that is, or can be conceived, in compariſon of infinite? What is it but a point, a cypher, compared to that, which is filled by him that is all in all! Think of this, and then aſk, *What is man?*

7. What is man, that the great God, who filleth heaven and earth, "the high and lofty one that inhabiteth eternity," ſhould ſtoop ſo inconceivably low, as to *be mindful of him?* Would not reaſon ſuggeſt to us, that ſo diminutive a creature would be overlooked by him in the immenſity

immenſity of his works? Eſpecially when we conſider,

II. Secondly, What is man, with regard to his duration?

1. *The days of man*, ſince the laſt reduction of human life, which ſeems to have taken place in the time of *Moſes*, (and not improbably was revealed to the man of God, at the time that he made this declaration) *are threeſcore years and ten.* This is the general ſtandard which God hath now appointed. *And if men be ſo ſtrong*, perhaps one in an hundred, "that they come to four-ſcore years, yet then is their ſtrength but labour and ſorrow: ſo ſoon paſſeth it away, and we are gone!"

2. Now what a poor pittance of duration is this, compared to the life of *Methuſelah?* "And Methuſelah lived nine hundred and ſixty and nine years." But what are theſe nine hundred and ſixty-nine years to the duration of an angel? which began "or ever the mountains were brought forth, or the foundations of the earth were laid." And what is the duration which has paſt, ſince the creation of angels, to that which paſt before they were created, to unbeginning eternity? To that half of eternity (if one may ſo ſpeak) which had then elapſed! And what are threeſcore years and ten to this?

3. Indeed what proportion can there poſſibly be, between any finite and infinite duration? What proportion is there between a thouſand, or ten thouſand years, or ten thouſand times ten thouſand ages to eternity? I know not that the inexpreſſible diſproportion between any conceivable part of time and eternity, can be illuſtrated

in a more ſtriking manner, than it is in the well-known paſſage of St. *Cyprian*. "Suppoſe there was a ball of ſand as large as the globe of earth; and ſuppoſe one grain of this were to be annihilated in a thouſand years; yet that whole ſpace of time wherein this ball would be annihilating, at the rate of one grain in a thouſand years, would bear leſs, yea unſpeakably, infinitely leſs proportion to eternity, than a ſingle grain of ſand would bear, to that whole maſs." What then are the ſeventy years of human life, in compariſon of eternity? In what terms can the proportion between theſe be expreſſed? It is nothing, yea infinitely leſs than nothing!

4. If then we add to the littleneſs of man, the inexpreſſible ſhortneſs of his duration, is it any wonder that a man of reflection, ſhould ſometimes feel a kind of fear, leſt the great, eternal, infinite Governor of the Univerſe, ſhould diſregard ſo diminutive a creature as man? A creature ſo every way inconſiderable, when compared either with immenſity or eternity! Did not both theſe reflections glance through, if not dwell upon the mind of the royal Pſalmiſt? Thus, in contemplation of the former, he breaks out into the ſtrong words of the text, "When I conſider the heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the ſtars which thou haſt ordained, What is man, that thou ſhouldſt be mindful of him? Or the ſon of man, that thou ſhouldſt regard him?" He is indeed, (to uſe St. *Auguſtine's* words) *Aliqua portio creaturæ tuæ*. Some portion of thy creation. But *quantula portio!* How amazingly ſmall a portion! How utterly beneath thy notice! It ſeems to be in contemplation of the latter, that he cries out in the hundred and forty-fourth Pſalm,

Pſalm, "Lord, what is man, that thou haſt ſuch reſpect unto him; or the ſon of man, that thou thoughtſt ſo regard him? Man is like a thing of nought. Why? His time paſſeth away like a ſhadow." In this (although in a very few places) the new tranſlation of the Pſalms, that bound up in our Bibles, is perhaps more proper than the old, that which we have in the Common Prayer Book. It runs thus, "Lord, what is man, that thou takeſt knowledge of him? or the ſon of man, that thou makeſt account of him?" According to the former tranſlation, *David* ſeems to be amazed that the eternal God, conſidering the littleneſs of man, ſhould have ſo much reſpect unto him, and ſhould ſo much regard him! But in the latter, he ſeems to wonder, ſeeing the life of man *paſſeth away like a ſhadow*, that God ſhould take any knowledge of him at all, or make any account of him!

5. And it is natural for us to make the ſame reflection, and to entertain the ſame fear. But how may we prevent this uneaſy reflection, and effectually cure this fear? Firſt, by conſidering what *David* does not appear to have taken at all into his account, namely, That the body is not the man: that man is not only a houſe of clay, but an immortal ſpirit; a ſpirit made in the image of God, an incorruptible picture of the God of glory; a ſpirit that is of infinitely more value than the whole earth! Of more value than the ſun, moon and ſtars put together; yea, than the whole material creation. Conſider, that the ſpirit of man is not only of a higher order, of a more excellent nature than any part of the viſible world, but alſo more durable, not liable either to diſſolution or decay. We know all the things

which are seen are temporal, of a changing, transient nature: but *the things which are not seen*, (such as is the soul of man in particular) *are eternal. They shall perish*, but the soul remaineth. They all shall *wax old as a garment*. But when heaven and earth shall pass away, the soul shall not pass away.

6. Consider, secondly, That declaration which the Father of Spirits hath made to us by the Prophet *Hosea*, "I am God and not man: therefore my compassions fail not." As if he had said, If I were only a man, or an angel, or any finite being, my knowledge might admit of bounds, and my mercy might be limited. But "my thoughts are not as your thoughts, and my mercy is not as your mercy. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my thoughts higher than your thoughts," and my mercy, my compassion, my ways of shewing it, higher than your ways.

7. That no shadow of fear might remain, no possibility of doubting: to shew what manner of regard the great, eternal God bears to little, short-lived man, but especially to his immortal part. God gave his Son, "his only Son, to the end that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish but have everlasting life." See how God loved the world! The Son of God, that was God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God: in glory equal with the Father, in majesty co-eternal, "emptied himself, took upon him the form of a servant, and being found in fashion as a *man*, was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." And all this he suffered not for himself, but for us men and for our salvation. "He bare all our sins in his own body upon the tree

tree, that by his ſtripes we might be healed." After this demonſtration of his love is it poſſible to doubt any longer, of God's tender regard for man, even though he was *dead in treſpaſſes and ſins?* Even when he ſaw us in our ſins and in our blood, he ſaid unto us, Live! Let us then fear no more! Let us doubt no more. He that "ſpared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, ſhall he not with him freely give us all things?"

8. "Nay, ſays the Philoſopher, if God ſo loved the world, did he not love a thouſand other worlds, as well as he did this? It is now allowed, that there are thouſands, if not millions of worlds, beſides this in which we live. And can any reaſonable man believe, that the Creator of all theſe, many of which are probably as large, yea, far larger than ours, would ſhew ſuch aſtoniſhingly greater regard, to one than to all the reſt?" I anſwer, Suppoſe there were millions of worlds, yet God may ſee in the abyſs of his infinite wiſdom, reaſons that do not appear to us why he ſaw good to ſhew this mercy to ours, in preference to thouſands or millions of other worlds.

9. I ſpeak this even upon the common ſuppoſition of the plurality of worlds; a very favourite notion with all thoſe who deny the Chriſtian Revelation: and for this reaſon; becauſe it affords them a foundation for ſo plauſible an objection to it. But the more I conſider that ſuppoſition, the more I doubt of it. Inſomuch that if it were allowed by all the Philoſophers in *Europe*, ſtill I could not allow it, without ſtronger proof than any I have met with yet.

10. "Nay, but is not the argument of the great *Huygens*, sufficient to put it beyond all doubt? When we view, says that able Astronomer, the Moon through a good telescope, we clearly discover

"Rivers and mountains on her spotted globe."

Now where rivers are, there are doubtless plants and vegetables of various kinds. And where vegetables are, there are undoubtedly animals, yea, rational ones as on earth. It follows then that the Moon has its inhabitants, and probably near akin to ours. But if our Moon is inhabited, we may easily suppose, so are all the Secondary Planets; and in particular, all the Satelites or Moons of Jupiter and Saturn. And if the Secondary Planets are inhabited why not the Primary? Why should we doubt it of Jupiter and Saturn themselves, as well as Mars, Venus and Mercury."

11. But do not you know, that Mr. *Huygens* himself before he died, doubted of this whole hypothesis? For upon farther observation, he found reason to believe, that the Moon has no atmosphere. He observed, that in a total eclipse of the Sun, on the removal of the shade from any part of the earth, the Sun immediately shines bright upon it; whereas if the Moon had an atmosphere, the Solar light while it shone through that atmosphere, would appear dim and dusky. Thus after an eclipse of the Moon, first a dusky light appears, on that part of it, from which the shadow of the earth removes, while that light passes through the atmosphere of the earth. Hence it appears, that the Moon has no atmosphere. Consequently it has no clouds, no rain,

no

no ſprings, no rivers; and therefore no plants or animals. But there is no proof or probability that the Moon is inhabited, neither have we any proof, that the other Planets are. Conſequently, the foundation being removed, the whole fabric falls to the ground.

12. "But, you will ſay, ſuppoſe this argument fails we may infer the ſame concluſion. The plurality of worlds, from the unbounded wiſdom, and power, and goodneſs of the Creator. It was full as eaſy to him, to create thouſands or millions of worlds as one. Can any one then believe, that he would exert all his power, and wiſdom, in creating a ſingle world? What proportion is there between this ſpeck of creation, and the great God that filleth Heaven and Earth! While

"We know the power of his Almighty hand
Could form another world from every ſand!"

13 To this boaſted proof, this *Argumentum palmarium* of the learned infidels, I anſwer, Do you expect to find any proportion between finite and infinite? Suppoſe God had created a thouſand more worlds than there are grains of ſand in the univerſe, what proportion would all theſe together bear, to the infinite Creator? Still, in compariſon of him, they would be, not a thouſand times, but infinitely leſs than a mite compared to the univerſe. Have done then with this childiſh prattle, about the proportion of creatures to their Creator: and leave it to the all wiſe God, to create what and when he pleaſes! For "who *beſides himſelf*, hath known the mind of the Lord? *Or* who hath been his counſellor?"

13. Suffice

13. Suffice it then for us to know this plain and comfortable truth, That the Almighty Creator hath shewn that regard to this poor little creature of a day, which he hath not shewn even to the inhabitants of heaven, *who kept not their first estate.* He hath given us his Son, his only Son, both to live and to die for us! O let us live unto him, that we may die unto him, and live with him for ever!

SERMON

SERMON CVI.

On Attending the Church Service.

1 Samuel ii. 17.

The sin of the young men was very great.

1. THE corruption not only of the Heathen world, but likewise of them that were called Christians has been matter of sorrow and lamentation to pious men, almost from the time of the Apostles. And hence as early as the second century, within a hundred years of St. *John's* removal from the earth, men who were afraid of being partakers of other men's sins, thought it their duty to separate from them. Hence in every age many have retired from the world lest they should be stained with the pollutions of it. In the third century many carried this so far, as to run into deserts and turn Hermits. But in the following age this took another turn. Instead of turning

Hermits, they turned Monks, Religious Houſes now began to be built in every chriſtian country. And Religious Communities were eſtabliſhed, both of men and women, who were entirely ſecluded from the reſt of mankind, having no intercourſe with their neareſt relations, nor with any but ſuch as were conſined, generally for life, within the ſame walls.

2. This ſpirit of literally renouncing the world, by retiring into religious houſes, did not ſo generally prevail after the reformation. Nay in Proteſtant countries, houſes of this kind were totally ſuppreſſed. But ſtill too many ſerious perſons (chiefly incited thereto by thoſe that are commonly called myſtic writers) were eager to ſeclude themſelves from the world, and run into ſolitude: ſuppoſing this to be the beſt, if not the only way, of eſcaping the pollution that is in the world

3. One thing which powerfully inclined them to ſeparate from the ſeveral Churches or religious Societies to which they had belonged, even from their infancy, was the belief that no good was to be expected from the miniſtration of unholy men. "What, ſaid they, can we think that a holy God will bleſs the miniſtry of wicked men? Can we imagine that they who are themſelves ſtrangers to the grace of God will manifeſt that grace to others? Is it to be ſuppoſed that God ever did, or ever will work, by the children of the devil? And if this cannot be ſuppoſed, ought we not to "come out from among them and be ſeparate?"

4. For more than twenty years, this never entered into the thought of thoſe that were called Methodiſts. But as more and more who had been

been brought up Diſſenters joined with them, they brought in more and more prejudice againſt the Church. In proceſs of time various circumſtances concurred, to increaſe, and to confirm it. Many had forgotten, that we were all at our firſt ſetting out determined members of the Eſtabliſhed Church. Yes, it was one of our original rules, that every member of our Society, ſhould attend the Church and Sacrament, unleſs he had been bred among Chriſtians of any other denomination.

5. In order therefore to prevent others from being puzzled and perplext, as ſo many have been already, it is neceſſary in the higheſt degree to conſider this matter thoroughly: calmly to enquire, Whether God ever did bleſs the miniſtry of ungodly men? And whether he does ſo at this hour? Here is a plain matter of fact. if God never did bleſs it, we ought to ſeparate from the Church; at leaſt where we have reaſon to believe that the Miniſter is an unholy man. If he ever did bleſs it, and does ſo ſtill, then we ought to continue therein.

6. Nineteen years ago we conſidered this queſtion, in our public Conference at Leeds, "Whether the Methodiſts ought to ſeparate from the Church?" And after a long and candid enquiry, it was determined, *nemine contradicente*, That it was not expedient for them to ſeparate. The reaſons were ſet down at large: and they ſtand equally good at this day.

7. In order to put this matter beyond all poſſible diſpute, I have choſen to ſpeak from theſe words, which give a fair occaſion of obſerving, what the dealings of God in his Church have been, even from ſo early a period: for it is generally

generally allowed, that *Eli* lived at leaſt a thouſand years before our Lord came into the world. In the verſes preceding the text we read, (v. 12. &c.) "Now the ſons of Eli were ſons of Belial; they knew not the Lord." They were wicked to an uncommon degree. Their profane violence, with reſpect to the ſacrifices, is related with all its ſhocking circumſtances, in the following verſes. But (what was a greater abomination ſtill) "They lay with the women that aſſembled at the door of the tabernacle of the congregation!" v. 22. On both theſe accounts "the ſin of the young men was very great, and men abhorred the offering of the Lord."

8. May I be permitted to make a little digreſſion, in order to correct a miſtranſlation in the twenty fifth verſe? In our tranſlation it runs thus, "They hearkened not unto the voice of their father, becauſe the Lord would ſlay them." Ought it not rather to be rendered, "Therefore "the Lord was about to ſlay them." As if he had ſaid, The Lord would not ſuffer their horrid and ſtubborn wickedneſs to eſcape unpuniſhed; but becauſe of that wickedneſs, he ſlew them both in one day, by the hand of the Philiſtines. They did not ſin (as might be imagined from the common tranſlation) becauſe God had determined to ſlay them: but God therefore determined to ſlay them, becauſe they had thus ſinned.

9. But to return. Their ſin was the more inexcuſable, becauſe they could not be ignorant of that dreadful conſequence thereof, that by reaſon of their enormous wickedneſs, "men abhorred the offering of the Lord." Many of the people were ſo deeply offended, that if they did not wholly refrain from the public worſhip, yet they attended

attended it with pain, abhorring the prieſts, while they honoured the ſacrifice.

10. And have we any proof, that the prieſts who ſucceeded them, were more holy than them, than *Hophni* and *Phinehas*, not only till God permitted ten of the tribes to be ſeparated from their brethren, and from the worſhip he had appointed: but even till *Judah* as well as *Iſrael*, for the wickedneſs of the prieſts as well as the people were carried into captivity?

11 What manner of men they were about the time of the *Babyloniſh* captivity, we learn from various paſſages in the prophecy of *Jeremiah*. From which it manifeſtly appears, that people and prieſts wallowed in all manner of vices. And how little they were amended, after they were brought back into their own land, we may gather from thoſe terrible words in the prophecy of *Malachi*. "And now, O ye Prieſts, this commandment is for you. If ye will not hear, and if ye will not lay it to heart, to give glory unto my name, ſaith the Lord of Hoſts, I will ſend even a curſe upon you, and I will curſe your bleſſings. Yea, I have curſed them already, becauſe ye would not lay it to heart. Behold I will curſe your ſeed, and I will ſpread dung upon their faces, even the dung of your ſolemn feaſts; and men ſhall take you away with it, Mal. ii. 1, 2.

12. Such were the prieſts of God in their ſeveral generations, till he brought the great High Prieſt into the world! And what manner of men were they during the time that he miniſtered upon earth? A large and particular account of their character we have in the twenty-third chapter of St. *Matthew*: and a worſe character it would be difficult to find, in all the Oracles of God. But may it not be ſaid, "Our Lord does

not there direct his course to the Priests, but to the Scribes and Pharisees?" He does; but this is the same thing. For the Scribes were what we now term Divines, the public Teachers of the people. And many, if not most of the Priests, especially all the strictest sort of them were Pharisees: so that in giving the character of the Scribes and Pharisees, he gives that of the Priests also.

13. Soon after the pouring out of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost, in the infancy of the Christian Church, there was indeed a glorious change. *Great grace was* then *upon them all*: Ministers as well as people. "The multitude of them that believed, were of one heart and of one soul." But how short a time did this continue? How soon did *the fine gold become dim?* Long before even the Apostolic Age expired, St. *Paul* himself had ground to complain, that some of his fellow-labourers had *forsaken* him, *having loved the present world.* And not long after, St. *John* reproved divers of the angels, that is, the Ministers of the Churches in *Asia*, because even in that early period, their "works were not found perfect before God."

14. Thus did *the mystery of iniquity* begin to *work*, in the Ministers as well as the people, even before the end of the Apostolic Age. But how much more powerfully did it work, as soon as those master-builders, the Apostles were taken out of the way? Both Ministers and people were then farther and farther removed from the hope of the Gospel. Insomuch that when St. *Cyprian*, about an hundred and fifty years after the death of St. *John*, describes the spirit and behaviour both of Laity and Clergy that were round about him,

him, one would be ready to ſuppoſe he was giving us a deſcription of the preſent Clergy and Laity of *Europe*. But the corruption which had been creeping in, drop by drop, during the ſecond and third century, in the beginning of the fourth, when *Conſtantine* called himſelf a Chriſtian, poured in upon the Church with a full tide. And whoever reads the hiſtory of the Church, from the time of *Conſtantine* to the Reformation, will eaſily obſerve that all the abominations of the Heathen world, and in following ages of the Mahometans, overflowed every part of it. And in every nation and city, the Clergy were not a whit more innocent than the Laity.

15. "But was there not a very conſiderable change in the body of the Clergy, as well as the Laity, at the time of the glorious Reformation from Popery?" Undoubtedly there was: and they were not only reformed from very many erroneous opinions, and from numberleſs ſuperſtitious and idolatrous modes of worſhip, till then prevailing over the Weſtern Church: but they were alſo exceedingly reformed, with reſpect to their lives and tempers. More of the ancient, ſcriptural Chriſtianity was to be found, almoſt in every part of *Europe*. Yet notwithſtanding this, all the works of the devil, all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs, ſin of every kind, continued to prevail, both over Clergy and Laity in all parts of Chriſtendom. Even thoſe Clergymen who moſt warmly contended about the externals of religion, were very little concerned for the life and power of it, for piety, juſtice, mercy and truth.

16. However, it muſt be allowed, that ever ſince the Reformation, and particularly in the

preſent century, the behaviour of the Clergy in general is greatly altered for the better. And ſhould it be granted, that in ſo many parts of the *Romiſh* Church, they are nearly the ſame as they were before, it muſt be granted likewiſe, that moſt of the *Proteſtant* Clergy, are far different from what they were. They have not only more learning of the moſt valuable kind, but abundantly much more religion. Inſomuch that the *Engliſh* and *Iriſh* Clergy are generally allowed to be not inferior to any in *Europe*, for piety as well as for knowledge.

17. And all this being allowed, what lack they yet? Can any thing be laid to their charge? I wiſh calmly and candidly to conſider this point, in the fear and in the preſence of God. I am far from deſiring to aggravate the defects of my brethren, or to paint them in the ſtrongeſt colours. Far be it from me, to treat others as I have been treated myſelf; to return evil for evil, or railing for railing. But to ſpeak the naked truth, not with anger or with contempt, as too many have done; I acknowledge, that many, if not moſt of thoſe that were appointed to miniſter in holy things, with whom it has been my lot to converſe, in almoſt every part of *England* or *Ireland*, for forty or fifty years laſt paſt, have not been eminent either for knowledge or piety. It has been loudly affirmed, That moſt of thoſe perſons now in connexion with *me*, who believe it their duty to call ſinners to repentance, having been taken immediately from low trades, taylors, ſhoemakers and the like, are a ſet of poor, ſtupid, illiterate men, that ſcarce know their right hand from their left: yet I cannot but ſay, that I would ſooner cut off my right hand, than ſuffer one of them

them to ſpeak a word in any of our Chapels, if I had not reaſonable proof, that he had more knowledge in the Holy Scriptures, more knowledge of himſelf, more knowledge of God and of the things of God; than nine in ten of the Clergy-men I have converſed with, either at the Univerſities, or elſewhere.

18. In the mean time I gladly allow that this charge does not concern the whole body of the Clergy: undoubtedly there are many Clergymen in theſe kingdoms, that are not only free from outward ſin, but men of eminent learning, and what is infinitely more, deeply acquainted with God. But ſtill I am conſtrained to confeſs, that the far greater part of thoſe Miniſters I have converſed with for above half a century have not been holy men, not devoted to God, not deeply acquainted either with God or themſelves. It could not be ſaid, that they *ſet* their "affections on things above, not on things of the earth;" or that their deſire, and the buſineſs of their lives was, to ſave their own ſouls and thoſe that heard them.

19. I have taken this unpleaſing view of a melancholy ſcene, of the character of thoſe who have been appointed of God to be ſhepherds of ſouls for ſo many ages, in order to determine this queſtion, Ought the children of God to refrain from his ordinances, becauſe they that adminiſter them are unholy men? A queſtion with which many ſerious perſons have been exceedingly perplexed. "Ought we not, ſay they, to refrain from the miniſtrations of ungodly men? For is it poſſible that we ſhould receive any good from the hands of thoſe that know not God? Can we

ſuppoſe that the grace of God was ever conveyed to men by the ſervants of the devil?"

What ſaith the Scripture? Let us keep cloſe to this, and we ſhall not be miſled. We have ſeen there, what manner of men, moſt of theſe have been who have miniſtered in holy things for many ages. Two or three thouſand years ago, we read, "the ſons of Eli were ſons of Belial; they knew not the Lord." But was this a ſufficient reaſon for the Iſraelites to refrain from their adminiſtrations? It is true, they *abhorred the offerings of the Lord* on their account. And yet they conſtantly attended them. And do you ſuppoſe that *Samuel*, holy as he was, ever adviſed them to do otherwiſe? Were not the Prieſts and the public Teachers equally ſtrangers to God, from this time to that of the *Babyloniſh* captivity? Undoubtedly they were. But did *Iſaiah* or any of the Prophets exhort them for that cauſe to forſake the ordinances of God? Were they not equally ungodly from the time of the *Babyloniſh* captivity, to the coming of Chriſt? How clearly does this appear, were there no other proof, from the Prophecies of *Jeremiah* and *Malachi*? Yet did either *Malachi* or *Jeremiah*, or any other of the Prophets exhort the people to ſeparate themſelves from theſe ungodly men?

2d. But to bring the matter nearer to ourſelves. Never were any Prieſts or public Teachers more corrupt, more totally eſtranged from God, than thoſe in the days of our bleſſed Lord. Were they not mere whited walls? Were not thoſe that were the beſt of them painted ſepulchres? Full of pride, luſt, envy, covetouſneſs? Of all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs? Is not this the account

account which our Lord himself, who knew what was in man, gives of them? But did he therefore refrain from that public service, which was performed by these very men? Or did he direct his Apostles so to do? Nay, just the contrary: in consequence of which, as he constantly attended them himself, so likewise did his disciples.

21. There is another circumstance in our Lord's conduct, which is worthy of our peculiar consideration. "He calls to him the twelve, and sends them forth, two by two," to preach the gospel, (Mark vi.) And as they do not go the warfare at their own cost, the very devils *were subject unto them.* Now one of these was *Judas Iscariot.* And did our Lord know that *he had a devil?* St. *John* expressly tells us he did. Yet he was coupled with another of the Apostles, and joined with them all in the same communion. Neither have we any reason to doubt but God blessed the labour of all his twelve ambassadors. But why did our Lord send him among them? Undoubtedly for our instruction. For a standing unanswerable proof, that he *sendeth by whom he will send:* that he can and will send salvation to men even by those, who will not accept of it themselves.

22. Our Lord gives us farther instruction upon this head, in the xxviiith chapter of Matthew (ver. 1, 2, 3.) we have those very remarkable words, "Then Jesus spoke to the multitude and his disciples saying, The Scribes and Pharisees sit in Moses' chair: all things therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, observe and do. But do not according to their works; for they say and do not." Of these very men he gives the blackest character in the following verses. Yet

is

is he so far from forbidding either *the multitude* or *his own disciples* to attend their ministrations, that he expressly commands them so to do, even in those words, "All things whatsoever they bid you observe, observe and do." These words imply a command to hear them: for how could they "observe and do what they bid them," If they did not hear it? I pray consider this, ye that say of the successors of these ungodly men, "They say and do not:" therefore we ought not to hear them. You see, your Master draws no such inference; nay the direct contrary. O be not wiser than your Master: follow his advice and do not reason against it.

23. But how shall we reconcile this with the direction given by St. *Paul* to the Corinthians? 'If any that is called a brother be a fornicator, or covetous, or an idolater, or a railer, with such an one, not even to eat," 1 Cor. v. 11. How is it reconcileable with that direction in his second epistle, (chap. vi. 17.) "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing." I answer, the former passage has no relation at all to the present question. It does not concern Ministers good or bad. The plain meaning of it is, Have no intimacy with any that is called a Christian, and lives in any open sin: a weighty exhortation, which should be much attended to by all the children of God. As little does the other passage refer to Ministers or Teachers of any kind. In this the Apostle is exhorting the children of God, to break off all intercourse with the children of the devil. The words literally are, "Go out from the midst of them and be ye separate, and touch not the unclean thing." Intimating, that they could

could not continue united with them, without being more or less partakers of their sins. We may therefore boldly affirm, that neither St. *Paul* nor any other of the inspired Writers, even advised holy men to separate from the Church wherein they were, because the Ministers were unholy.

24. Nevertheless it is true, that many pious Christians as was observed before, did separate themselves from the Church, some even in the second, and many more in the third century. Some of these retired into the desert, and lived altogether alone: others built themselves houses, afterwards termed *Convents*, and only secluded themselves from the rest of the world. But what was the fruit of this separation? The same that might easily be foreseen. It increased and bestowed in an astonishing degree, the total corruption of the Church. The salt which was thus heaped up in a corner had effectually lost its savour. The light which was put under a bushel, no longer shone before men. In consequence of this, ungodliness and unrighteousness reigned without controul. The world being given up into the hands of the devil, wrought all his works with greediness. And gross darkness joined with all manner of wickedness, covered the whole earth.

25. "But if all this wickedness, was not a sufficient reason for separating from a corrupt Church, why did *Calvin* and *Luther* with their followers separate from the Church of *Rome?* I answer, They did not properly separate from it, but were violently thrust out of it. They were not suffered to continue therein, upon any other terms than subscribing to all the errors of that Church

Church, and joining in all their superstition and idolatry. Therefore this separation lay at *their* door. With us it was not a matter of choice, but of necessity. And if such necessity was now laid upon us we ought to separate from any Church under Heaven.

26. There were not the same reasons why various bodies of men should afterwards separate from the Church of *England*. No sinful terms of communion were imposed upon them; neither are at this day. Most of them separated, either because of some *opinions*, or some *modes of worship*, which they did not approve of. Few of them assigned the unholiness either of the Clergy or Laity, as the cause of their separation. And if any did so, it did not appear that they themselves were a jot better, than those they separated from.

27. But the grand reason, which many give for separating from the Church, namely that the Ministers are unholy men, is founded on this assertion, That the ministration of evil men can do no good; that we may call the sacraments *means of grace*: but men who do not receive the grace of God themselves, cannot convey that grace to others. So that we can never expect to receive the blessing of God through the servants of the devil.

28. Consider, first, Did the Jewish sacraments convey no saving grace to the hearers, because they were administered by unholy men? If so, none of the Israelites were saved, from the time of *Eli*, to the coming of Christ. For their Priests were not a whit better than ours; if they were not much worse. But who will dare to affirm this? Which is no less in effect, than to affirm,

That

That all the children of Iſrael went to hell for eleven or twelve hundred years together.

29. Did the ordinances adminiſtered in the time of our bleſſed Lord convey no grace to thoſe that attended them? Surely then the Holy Ghoſt would not have commended "Zacharias and Elizabeth for walking in thoſe ordinances!" If the miniſtrations of wicked men did no good, would our Lord have commanded his followers (ſo far from forbidding them) to attend thoſe of the Scribes and Phariſees? Obſerve again the remarkable words (Matt. xxiii. 1, &c.) "Then ſpake Jeſus to the multitude, and to his diſciples, ſaying, The Scribes and Phariſees ſit in Moſes' ſeat, (are your appointed teacher) all therefore whatſoever they bid you obſerve, that obſerve and do."—Now what were theſe Scribes and Phariſees? Were they not the vileſt of men? Yet theſe very men he commands them to hear. This command is plainly implied in thoſe words, "Whatſoever they command you to obſerve, that obſerve and do." For unleſs they heard what they ſaid, they could not do it.

30. Conſider a little farther, the dreadful conſequences of affirming, that wicked Miniſters do no good. That the ordinances adminiſtered by them do not convey ſaving grace to thoſe that attend thsm. If it be ſo, then well nigh all the Chriſtians from the time of the Apoſtles, to that of the Reformation are periſhed! For what manner of men were well nigh all the Clergy, during all thoſe centuries? Conſult the Hiſtory of the Church in every age, and you will find more and more proofs of their corruption. It is true, they have not been ſo openly abandoned ſince, but ever ſince that happy period there has been

been a conſiderable change for the better, in the Clergy as well as the Laity. But ſtill there is reaſon to fear that even thoſe who now miniſter in holy things, who are outwardly devoted to God for that purpoſe, (yea, and in Proteſtant as well as Romiſh countries) are nevertheleſs far more devoted to the world, to riches, honour, or pleaſure (a few comparatively excepted) than they are to God: ſo that in truth they are as far from Chriſtian holineſs as earth is from heaven. If then no grace is conveyed by the miniſtry of wicked men, in what a caſe is the Chriſtian world? How hath God forgotten to be gracious? How hath he forſaken his own inheritance? O think not ſo! Rather ſay with our own Church (though in direct oppoſition to the Church of *Rome:* which maintains, "If the Prieſt does not miniſter with a *pure intention*, which no wicked man can do, then the ſacrament is no ſacrament at all.") The unworthineſs of the Miniſter doth not hinder the efficacy of God's ordinance. The reaſon is plain; becauſe the efficacy is derived, not from him that adminiſters, but from him that ordains it. He does not, will not, ſuffer his grace to be intercepted, though the meſſenger will not receive it himſelf.

31. Another conſequence would follow from the ſuppoſition, That no grace is conveyed by wicked Miniſters, namely, That a conſcientious perſon cannot be a member of any National Church in the world. For wherever he is, it is great odds, whether a holy Miniſter be ſtationed there: and if there be not, it is mere loſt labour, to worſhip in that congregation. But, bleſſed be God, this is not the caſe: we know by our own happy experience, and by the experience of thouſands

fands that the word of the Lord is not bound though uttered by an unholy Minifter: and the facraments are not dry breafts whether he that adminifters, be holy or unholy.

32. Conſider one more conſequence of this ſuppoſition, ſhould it ever be generally received. Were all men to ſeparate from thoſe Churches where the Miniſter was an unholy man: (as they ought to do, if the grace of God never did, nor could attend his miniſtry) what confuſion, what tumults, what commotions would this occaſion throughout Chriſtendom? What evil ſurmiſings, heart-burnings, jealouſies, envyings, muſt everywhere ariſe? What cenſuring, tale-bearing, ſtrife, contenſion? Neither would it ſtop here: but from evil words the contending parties would ſoon proceed to evil deeds: and rivers of blood would ſoon be ſhed, to the utter ſcandal of Mahometans and Heathens.

33. Let us not then trouble and embroil ourſelves and our neighbours with unprofitable diſputations, but all agree to ſpread, to the uttermoſt of our power, the quiet and peaceable goſpel of Chriſt. Let us make the beſt of whatever miniſtry the providence of God has aſſigned us. Near fifty years ago, a great and good man, Dr. *Potter*, then Archbiſhop of *Canterbury*, gave me an advice, for which I have ever ſince had occaſion to bleſs God. "If you deſire to be extenſively uſeful, do not ſpend your time and ſtrength, in contending for or againſt ſuch things as are of a diſputable nature; but in teſtifying againſt open, notorious vice, and in promoting real, eſſential holineſs." Let us keep to this; leaving a thouſand diſputable points to thoſe that have no better

buſineſs, than to toſs the ball of controverſy to and fro, let us keep cloſe to our point. Let us bear a faithful teſtimony in our ſeveral ſtations, againſt all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs: and with all our might recommend that inward and outward holineſs *without which no man ſhall ſee the Lord.*

SERMON

SERMON CVII.

ON CONSCIENCE.

2 Cor. i. 12.

For our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our Conscience.

1. HOW few words are there in the world more common than this, *Conscience?* It is almost in every one's mouth. And one would thence be apt to conclude, that no word can be found, which is more generally understood. But it may be doubted whether this is the case or no, although numberless treatises have been written upon it. For it is certain, a great part of those writers have rather puzzled the cause than cleared it; that they have usually "darkened counsel, by uttering words without knowledge."

2. The best treatise on the subject which I remember to have seen, is translated from the

French of Monſ. *Placett*, which deſcribes in a clear and rational manner, the nature and offices of Conſcience. But though it was publiſhed near a hundred years ago, it is in very few hands. And indeed a great part of thoſe that have read it, complain of the length of it. An octavo volume of ſeveral hundred pages, upon ſo plain a ſubject, was likely to prove a trial of patience to moſt perſons of underſtanding. It ſeems therefore there is ſtill wanting a diſcourſe upon the ſubject, ſhort as well as clear. This by the aſſiſtance of God I will endeavour to ſupply, by ſhewing firſt, the Nature of Conſcience; and then the ſeveral ſorts of it; after which I ſhall conclude with a few important directions.

I. 1. And firſt, I am to ſhew the Nature of Conſcience. This a very pious man in the laſt century (in his Sermon on Univerſal Conſcientiouſneſs) deſcribes in the following manner, "This word, which literally ſignifies *Knowing with another*, excellently ſets forth the ſcriptural notion of it. So *Job* xvi. 19. "My witneſs is in heaven:" and ſo the Apoſtle, *Rom.* ix. 1. "I ſay the truth, my conſcience alſo bearing me witneſs in the Holy Ghoſt." In both places it is as if he had ſaid, God witneſſeth with my Conſcience. Conſcience is placed in the middle, under God, and above man. It is a kind of ſilent reaſoning of the mind, whereby thoſe things which are judged to be right, are approved of with pleaſure; but thoſe which are judged evil are diſapproved of with uneaſineſs." This is a tribunal in the breaſt of men, to accuſe ſinners and excuſe them that do well.

2. To

2. To view it in a ſomewhat different light, Conſcience, as well as the Latin word, from which it is taken, and the Greek word συνειδησεως, neceſſarily imply "the knowledge of two or more things together." Suppoſe the knowledge of our words and actions, and at the ſame time of their goodneſs or badneſs: if it be not rather the faculty whereby we know at once our actions and the quality of them.

3. *Conſcience* then is that faculty, whereby we are at once conſcious of our own thoughts, words and actions, and of their merit or demerit, of their being good or bad, and conſequently deſerving either praiſe or cenſure. And ſome pleaſure generally attends the former ſentence, ſome uneaſineſs the latter. But this varies exceedingly, according to education, and a thouſand other circumſtances.

4. Can it be denied, that ſomething of this is found in every man born into the world? And does it not appear, as ſoon as the underſtanding opens? as ſoon as reaſon begins to dawn? Does not every one then begin to know, that there is a difference between good and evil? how imperfect ſoever, the various circumſtances of this ſenſe of good and evil may be? Does not every man, for inſtance, know, unleſs blinded by the prejudices of education (like the inhabitants of the Cape of Good Hope) that it is good to honour his parents? Do not all men, however uneducated, or barbarous, allow, It is right to do to others as we would have them do to us? And are not all who know this, commended in their own mind, when they do any thing contrary thereto? as, on the other hand, when they act ſuitable

thereto, they have the approbation of their own Conſcience.

5. This faculty ſeems to be what is uſually meant by thoſe who ſpeak of *Natural Conſcience:* an expreſſion frequently found in ſome of our beſt Authors, but yet not ſtrictly juſt. For though in one ſenſe it may be termed *natural*, becauſe it is found in all men, yet properly ſpeaking, it is not *natural;* but a ſupernatural gift of God, above all his natural endowments. No, it is not nature but the Son of God, that is "the true light, which enlighteneth every man which cometh into the world." So that we may ſay to every human creature, *He*, not nature, *hath ſhewn thee, O man what is good.* And it is his Spirit who giveth thee an inward check, who cauſeth thee to feel uneaſy, when thou walkeſt in any influence contrary to the light which he hath given thee.

6. It may give a peculiar force to that beautiful paſſage, to conſider by whom, and on what occaſion the words were uttered. The perſons ſpeaking are *Balak* the king of *Moab*, and *Balaam*, then under divine impreſſions: (it ſeems, then *not far from the kingdom of God*, although afterward he ſo foully revolted.) Probably *Balak* too at that time experienced ſomething of the ſame influence. This occaſioned his *conſulting with*, or aſking counſel of *Balaam*, his propoſing the queſtion to which *Balaam* gives ſo full an anſwer, (*Micah* vi. ver. 5, &c.) "O my people (ſaith the Prophet in the name of God) remember what Balak the King of Moab conſulted (it ſeems in the fulneſs of his heart.) And what Balaam the ſon of Beor anſwered him. Wherewith (ſaid he) ſhall I come before the Lord, and bow myſelf before

fore the high God? Shall I come before him with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my first born for my transgression? The fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" (This the Kings of *Moab* had actually done, on occasions of deep distress: a remarkable account of which is recorded in the third chapter of the second book of *Kings*.) To this *Balaam* makes that noble reply (being doubtless then taught of God) "He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good. And what doth the Lord thy God require of thee but to do justly, love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God!"

7. To take a more distinct view of Conscience, it appears to have a threefold office: First, it is a *witness*, testifying what we have done, in thought, or word or action: Secondly, It is a *Judge* passing sentence on what we have done, that it is good or evil. And, Thirdly, it in some sort *executes* the sentence by occasioning a degree of complacency in him that does well, and a degree of uneasiness, in him that does evil.

8. Professor *Hutchinson* late of *Glasgow*, places Conscience in a different light. In his Essay on the Passions, he observes, That we have several *senses*, or natural avenues of pleasure and pain, besides the five external senses. One of these he terms "*The Public Sense*, whereby we are naturally pained at the misery of a fellow creature, and pleased at his deliverance from it. And every man, says he, has a *moral sense*, whereby he approves of benevolence and disapproves of cruelty. Yea, he is uneasy, when he himself has done a cruel action, and pleased when he has done a generous one."

9. All

9. All this is in ſome ſenſe undoubtedly true. But it is not true, that either the *public* or the *moral ſenſe*, (both of which are included in the term Conſcience,) is now *natural* to man. Whatever may have been the caſe at firſt, while man was in a ſtate of innocence, both the one and the other is now a branch of that ſupernatural gift of God, which we uſually ſtile *preventing grace*. But the Profeſſor does not at all agree with this. He ſets God wholly out of the queſtion. God has nothing to do with his ſcheme of virtue, from the beginning to the end. So that to ſay the truth, his ſcheme of virtue is Atheiſm all over. This is refinement indeed! Many have excluded God out of the world: he excludes him even out of religion!

10. But do we not miſtake him? Do we take his meaning right? That it may be plain enough, that no man may miſtake him, he propoſes this queſtion, "What if a man in doing a virtuous, that is a generous action, in helping a fellow-creature, has an eye to God, either as commanding, or as promiſing to reward it? Then, ſays he, ſo far as he has an eye to God, the virtue of the action is loſt. Whatever actions ſpring from an eye to the recompence of reward, have no virtue, no moral goodneſs in them." Alas! Was this man called a Chriſtian? How unjuſtly was he ſlandered with that aſſertion? Even Dr. *Taylor*, though he does not allow Chriſt to be God, yet does not ſcruple to term him "A perſon of conſummate *virtue*." But the Profeſſor cannot allow him any virtue at all!

11. But to return. What is Conſcience in the Chriſtian ſenſe? It is that faculty of the ſoul, which, by the aſſiſtance of the grace of God, ſees at

at one and the same time, 1. Our own tempers and lives, the real nature and quality of our thoughts, words and actions. 2. The rule whereby we are to be directed, and 3. The agreement or disagreement therewith. To express this a little more largely, Conscience implies, First, The faculty a man has of knowing himself, of discerning both in general and in particular, his own tempers, thoughts, words and actions. But this it is not possible for him to do, without the assistance of the Spirit of God. Otherwise self-love, and indeed every other irregular passion would disguise, and wholly conceal him from himself. It implies, Secondly, a knowledge of the rule, whereby he is to be directed in every particular, which is no other than the written word of God. Conscience implies, Thirdly, a knowledge that all his thoughts, and words and actions are conformable to that rule. In all the offices of Conscience, the *unction of the Holy One* is indispensably needful. Without this neither could we clearly discern our lives or tempers; nor could we judge of the rule whereby we are to walk, or of our conformity or disconformity to it.

12. This is properly the account of a *good* Conscience, which may be in other terms expressed thus, a divine Consciousness of walking in all things according to the written word of God. It seems indeed, that there can be no Conscience, which has not a regard to God. If you say, "Yes: there certainly may be a consciousness of having done right or wrong, without any reference to him." I answer. This I cannot grant. I doubt whether the very words, *right* and *wrong*, according to the Christian system, do not imply in the very idea of them, agreement and disagreement

agreement to the will and word of God. If so, there is no such thing as Conscience in a Christian, if we leave God out of the question.

13. In order to the very existence of a good Conscience, as well as to the continuance of it, the continued influence of the Spirit of God, is absolutely needful. Accordingly the Apostle *John* declares to the believers of all ages, "Ye have an unction from the Holy One; and ye know all things:" all things that are needful to your having "a conscience void of offence, toward God and toward man." So he adds, "Ye have no need that any one" should teach you, otherwise "than as that anointing teacheth you." That anointing clearly teacheth us those three things, First, the true meaning of God's word. Secondly, our own tempers and lives, bringing all our thoughts, words and actions to remembrance; and Thirdly, the agreement of all, with the commandments of God.

14. Proceed we now to consider in the second place, the several *sorts* of Conscience. A good Conscience has been spoken of already. This St. *Paul* expresses various ways. In one place he simply terms it, a "good Conscience toward God:" in another, "a Conscience void of offence toward God and toward man." But he speaks still more largely in the text: "Our rejoicing is this, the testimony of our Conscience, that in simplicity, (with a single eye) and godly sincerity, we have had our conversation in the world." Meantime he observes that this was done, "not by fleshly wisdom:" commonly called prudence; (this never did, nor ever can produce such an effect:) "but by the grace of God," which alone is sufficient to work this in any child of man.

15. Nearly

15. Nearly allied to this, (if it be not the same placed in another view, or a particular branch of it) is a *tender* Conscience. One of a tender Conscience is exact in observing any deviation from the word of God, whether in thought, or word, or work, immediately feels remorse and self-condemnation for it. And the constant cry of his soul is,

"O that my tender soul may fly
The first abhorred approach of ill:
Quick as the apple of an eye
The slightest touch of sin to feel."

16. But sometimes this excellent quality, *tenderness* of Conscience, is carried to an extreme. We find some who fear where no fear is, who are continually condemning themselves without cause; imagining some things to be sinful, which the Scripture no where condemns; and supposing other things to be their duty, which the Scripture no where enjoins. This is properly termed, a *scrupulous* Conscience, and is a sore evil. It is highly expedient to yield to it as little as possible; rather it is a matter of earnest prayer, that you may be delivered from this sore evil, and may recover a sound mind: to which nothing would contribute more, than the converse of a pious and judicious friend.

17. But the extreme which is opposite to this, is far more dangerous. A *hardened* Conscience is a thousand times more dangerous than a scrupulous one: that can violate a plain command of God, without any self-condemnation; either doing what he has expressly forbidden, or neglecting what he has expressly commanded: and yet without

without any remorſe: yea, perhaps glorying in this very hardneſs of heart! Many inſtances of this deplorable ſtupidity we meet with at this day: and even among people that ſuppoſe themſelves to have no ſmall ſhare of religion. A perſon is doing ſomething which the Scripture clearly forbids. You aſk, How do you dare to do this? and are anſwered with perfect unconcern, "O my heart does not condemn me." I reply, "So much the worſe. I would to God it did. You would then be in a ſafer ſtate than you are now. It is a dreadful thing, to be condemned by the word of God, and yet not to be condemned by your own heart!" If we can break the leaſt of the known commands of God, without any ſelf-condemnation, it is plain that the god of this world hath hardened our hearts. If we do not ſoon recover from this, we ſhall be *paſt feeling*, and our Conſcience (as St. *Paul* ſpeaks) will be "ſeared as with a hot iron."

18. I have now only to add a few important directions. The firſt great point is this: ſuppoſe we have a tender Conſcience, how ſhall we preſerve it. I believe there is only one poſſible way of doing this, which is, To obey it. Every act of diſobedience, tends to blind and deaden it, to put out its eyes, that it may not ſee the good and the acceptable will of God, and to deaden the hear, that it may not feel ſelf-condemnation, when we act in oppoſition to it. And on the contrary, every act of obedience gives to the Conſcience a ſharper and ſtronger ſight, and a quicker feeling of whatever offends the glorious Majeſty of God. Therefore, if you deſire to have your Conſcience always quick to diſcern, and faithful to accuſe or excuſe you; if you would

would preserve it always sensible and tender, be sure to obey it at all events. Continually listen to its admonitions, and steadily follow them. Whatever it directs you to do according to the word of God, do; however grievous to flesh and blood. Whatever it forbids, if the prohibition be grounded on the word of God, for you do it not, however pleasing it may be to flesh and blood. The one or the other may frequently be the case. What God forbids may be pleasing to our evil nature. There you are called to deny yourself, or you deny your Maker. What he enjoins, may be painful to nature: there take up your cross. So true is our Lord's word, "Except a man deny himself, and take up his cross daily, he cannot be my disciple."

19. I cannot conclude this discourse better than with an extract from Dr *Annesley's* Sermon on Universal Conscientiousness.*

"Be persuaded to practice the following directions, and your Conscience will continue right.

1. Take heed of every sin: count no sin small: and obey every command with your might. Watch against the first risings of sin, and beware of the borders of sin. Shun the very appearance of evil. Venture not upon temptations or occasions of sin.

2. Consider yourself as living under God's eye: live as in the sensible presence of the jealous God. Remember, all things are naked and open before him: You cannot deceive him; for he is infinite wisdom: you cannot fly from him; for he is every where: you cannot bribe him; for he

* Dr. ANNESLEY, [my mother's father] was Pastor of the Parish of CRIPPLEGATE.

is righteouſneſs itſelf! Speak as knowing God hears you: walk, as knowing God beſets you on every ſide. The Lord is with you, while you are with him: that is, you ſhall enjoy his favourable preſence, while you live in his awful preſence.

3. Be ſerious and frequent in the examination of your heart and life. There are ſome duties like thoſe parts of the body, the want of which, may be ſupplied by other parts: but the want of theſe nothing can ſupply. Every evening review your carriage through the day; what you have done, or thought, that was unbecoming your character: whether your heart has been inſtant upon religion, and indifferent to the world? Have a ſpecial care of two portions of your time, namely morning and evening: the morning to forethink what you have to do, and the evening to examine, Whether you have done what you ought?

4. Let every action have reference to your whole life, and not to a part only. Let all your ſubordinate ends be ſuitable to the great end of your living. "Exerciſe yourſelf unto godlineſs." Be as diligent in religion, as thou wouldſt have thy children that go to ſchool be in learning. Let thy whole life be a preparation for heaven, like the preparation of wreſtlers for the combat.

5. Do not venture on ſin, becauſe Chriſt hath purchaſed a pardon; that is a moſt horrible abuſe of Chriſt. For this very reaſon there was no ſacrifice under the law for any wilful ſin; leſt people ſhould think, they knew the price of ſins, as thoſe do who deal in Popiſh indulgences.

6. Be nothing in your own eyes: for what is it, alas, that we have to be proud of! Our very conception was ſinful, our birth painful, our life toilſome, our death we know not what! But all this is nothing to the ſtate of our ſoul.

If

If we know this, what excuſe have we for pride?

7. Conſult duty; not events. We have nothing to do but to mind our duty. All ſpeculations that tend not to holineſs, are among your ſuperfluities: but forebodings of what may befal you in doing your duty, may be reckoned among your ſins: and to venture upon ſin to avoid danger, is to ſink the ſhip for fear of pirates. O how quiet, as well as holy would our lives be, had we learned that ſingle leſſon, To be careful for nothing; but to do our duty, and leave all conſequences to God! What madneſs for ſilly duſt to preſcribe to infinite Wiſdom? To let go our work and meddle with God's? He has managed the concerns of the world, and of every individual perſon in it, without giving cauſe of complaint to any, for above theſe five thouſand years. And does he now need *your* counſel? Nay, it is *your* buſineſs to mind your own duty.

8. What advice you would give another, take yourſelf: the worſt of men are apt enough to lay burdens on others, which if they would take on themſelves, they would be rare Chriſtians.

9. Do nothing on which you cannot pray for a bleſſing. Every action of a Chriſtian that is good, is ſanctified by the word and prayer. It becomes not a Chriſtian to do any thing ſo trivial, that he cannot pray over it. And if he would but beſtow a ſerious ejaculation on every occurrent action, ſuch a prayer would cut off all things ſinful and encourage all things lawful.

10. Think, and ſpeak, and do what you are perſuaded Chriſt himſelf would do in your caſe, were he on earth. It becomes a Chriſtian, rather to be an example, than to follow one. But by

imitating Chriſt you become an example to all, who was, and is, and ever will be, our abſolute pattern. O Chriſtians, how did Chriſt pray, and redeem time for prayer! How did Chriſt preach, out of whoſe mouth proceeded no other but gracious words? What time did Chriſt ſpend in impertient diſcourſe? How did Chriſt go up and down doing good to men, and what was pleaſing to God? Beloved, I commend to you theſe four memorials. 1. Mind duty: 2. What is the duty of another in your caſe is your own: 3. Do not meddle with any thing, if you cannot ſay, The bleſſing of the Lord be upon it. 4. Above all, ſooner forget your Chriſtian name, than forget to eye Chriſt! Whatever treatment you meet with from the world, remember him and follow his ſteps "who did no ſin, neither was guile found in his mouth! Who when he was reviled, reviled not again, but committed himſelf to him that judgeth righteouſly."

SERMON

SERMON CVIII.

ON FAITH.

HEBREWS xi. 6.

Without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe him.

1. BUT what is *faith?* It is a divine *evidence, and conviction of things not ſeen:* of things which are not ſeen now, whether they are viſible or inviſible in their own nature. Particularly it is a divine evidence and conviction of God and of the things of God. This is the moſt comprehenſive definition of faith that ever was or can be given, as including every ſpecies of faith, from the loweſt to the higheſt. And yet I do not remember any eminent writer, that has given a full and clear account of the ſeveral ſorts of it, among all the verboſe and tedious treatiſes, which have been publiſhed upon the ſubject.

2. Something indeed of a ſimilar kind has been written by that great and good man, Mr.

Fletcher, in his treatise on the various *Dispensations* of the grace of God. Herein he observes, that there are four dispensations, that are distinguished from each other, by the degree of light which God vouchsafes to them that are under each. A small degree of light is given, to those that are under the *Heathen* dispensation. These generally believed, "that there was a God, and that he was a rewarder of them that diligently seek him." But a far more considerable degree of light was vouchsafed to the *Jewish* nation: inasmuch as to them *were entrusted* the grand means of light, the oracles of God. Hence many of these had clear and exalted views of the nature and attributes of God: of their duty to God and man: yea, and of the great promise, made to our first parents and transmitted by them to their posterity, that "the seed of the woman should bruise the serpent's head."

3. But above both the Heathen and Jewish dispensation, was that of *John* the *Baptist*. To him a still clearer light was given: and he was himself "a burning and a shining light." To him it was given, to "behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world." Accordingly our Lord himself affirms, that "of all which had been born of women," there had not till that time arisen "a greater than John the Baptist!" But nevertheless he informs us, "He that is least in the kingdom of God, (the Christian dispensation,) is greater than he." By one that is under the Christian dispensation, Mr. *Fletcher* means, one that has received the Spirit of adoption, that has the Spirit of God witnessing "with his spirit, that he is a child of God."

In

In order to explain this ſtill farther, I will endeavour, by the help of God,

Firſt, To point out the ſeveral ſorts of faith, and ſecondly, To draw ſome practical inferences.

I. In the firſt place, I will endeavour to point out the ſeveral ſorts of faith. It would be eaſy, either to reduce theſe to a ſmaller number, or to divide them into a greater. But it does not appear that this would anſwer any valuable purpoſe.

1. The loweſt ſort of faith, if it be any faith at all, is that of a *Materialiſt:* a man who (like the late Lord *Kaim*) believes there is nothing but matter in the univerſe. I ſay, if it be any faith at all: for properly ſpeaking, it is not. It is not *an evidence or conviction of God*, for they do not believe there is any: neither is it a conviction of things not ſeen; for they deny the exiſtence of ſuch. Or if, for decency ſake, they allow there is a God, yet they ſuppoſe even him to be material. For one of their maxims is,

"*Jupiter eſt quodcunq; vides.*"

"Whatever you ſee is God."

Whatever you ſee! A viſible, tangible god! Excellent divinity! Exquiſite nonſenſe!

2. The ſecond ſort of faith, if you allow a Materialiſt to have any, is the faith of a *Deiſt*. I mean, one who believes there is a God, diſtinct from matter; but does not believe the Bible. Of theſe we may obſerve two ſorts: one ſort, are mere beaſts in human ſhape, wholly under the power of the baſeſt paſſions, and having

"A downright appetite to mix with mud."

Other

Other Deists are, in most respects rational creatures, though unhappily prejudiced against Christianity. Most of these believe the being and attributes of God, they believe, that God made and governs the world: and that the soul does not die with the body, but will remain for ever in a state of happiness or misery.

3. The next sort of faith is the faith of *Heathens*, with which I join that of *Mahometans*. I cannot but prefer this before the faith of the Deists; because though it embraces nearly the same objects, yet they are rather to be pitied than blamed, for the narrowness of their faith. And their not believing the whole truth, is not owing to want of sincerity, but merely to want of light. When one asked *Chicali*, an old Indian Chief, "Why do not you *red* men know as much as us *white* men?" He readily answered, "Because you have *the great word*, and we have not?"

4. It cannot be doubted but this plea will avail for millions of modern *Heathens*. Inasmuch as to them little is given, of them little will be required. As to the ancient *Heathens*, millions of them likewise were savages. No more therefore will be expected of them, than the living up to the light they had. But many of them, especially in the civilized nations, we have great reason to hope, although they lived among *Heathens*, yet were quite of another spirit: being taught of God, by his inward voice, all the essentials of true religion. Yea, and so was that *Mahometan*, an *Arabian*, who a century or two ago, wrote the life of *Hai Ebn Yokton*. The story seems to be feigned; but it contains all the principles of pure religion and undefiled.

5. But

5. But in general, we may ſurely place the faith of a *Jew*, above that of a *Heathen* or *Mahometan*. By *Jewiſh* faith I mean the faith of thoſe who lived between the giving of the law and the coming of Chriſt. Theſe, that is, thoſe that were ſerious and ſincere among them, believed all that is written in the Old Teſtament. In particular, they believed, that in the fulneſs of time, *the Meſſiah* would appear, to "finiſh the tranſgreſſion, to make an end of ſin, and bring in everlaſting righteouſneſs."

6. It is not ſo eaſy to paſs any judgment concerning the faith of our modern *Jews*. It is plain, "the veil is ſtill upon their hearts, when Moſes and the Prophets are read." The god of this world ſtill hardens their hearts, and ſtill blinds their eyes; "leſt at any time the light of the glorious goſpel" ſhould break in upon them. So that we may ſay of this people, as the Holy Ghoſt ſaid to their forefathers, "The heart of this people is waxed groſs, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they cloſed; leſt they ſhould ſee with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and underſtand with their hearts, and ſhould be converted, and I ſhould heal them," Acts xxviii. 27. Yet it is not our part to paſs ſentence upon them, but to leave them to their own maſter.

7. I need not dwell upon the faith of *John* the *Baptiſt*, any more than the diſpenſation which he was under: becauſe theſe, as Mr. *Fletcher* well deſcribes them, were peculiar to himſelf. Setting him aſide, the faith of the *Roman Catholics* in general, ſeems to be above that of the ancient *Jews*. If moſt of theſe are volunteers in faith, believing more than God has revealed, it cannot be

be denied, that they believe all which God has revealed, as neceſſary to ſalvation. In this we rejoice on their behalf: we are glad that none of thoſe new articles, which they added at the Council of *Trent*, to "the faith once delivered to the ſaints," does ſo materially contradict any of the ancient articles, as to render them of no effect.

8. The faith of the *Proteſtants*, in general, embraces only thoſe truths as neceſſary to ſalvation, which are clearly revealed in the Oracles of God. Whatever is plainly declared in the Old and New Teſtament, is the object of their faith. They believe neither more nor leſs, than what is manifeſtly contained in, and proveable by the Holy Scriptures. The word of God is "a lanthern to their feet, and a light in all their paths." They dare not on any pretence go from it, to the right-hand or to the left. The written word is the whole and ſole rule of their faith, as well as practice. They believe whatſoever God has declared, and profeſs to do whatſoever he hath commanded. This is the proper faith of *Proteſtants:* by this they will abide and no other.

9. Hitherto faith has been conſidered chiefly as an evidence and conviction of ſuch or ſuch truths. And this is the ſenſe wherein it is taken at this day in every part of the Chriſtian world. But in the mean time let it be carefully obſerved (for eternity depends upon it), that neither the faith of a Roman Catholic, nor that of a Proteſtant, if it contains no more than this, no more than the embracing ſuch and ſuch truths, will avail any more before God, than the faith of a *Mahometan* or a *Heathen*, yea of a *Deiſt* or *Materialiſt*. For *can* this *faith ſave him?* Can it ſave any man either

either from sin or from hell? No more than it could save *Judas Iscariot*; no more than it could save the devil and his angels: all of whom are convinced, that every tittle of Holy Scripture is true.

10. But what is the faith which is properly saving? Which brings eternal salvation to all those that keep it to the end? It is such a divine conviction of God, and the things of God, as even in its infant state, enables every one that possesses it to "fear God and work righteousness." And whosoever in every nation believes thus far, the Apostle declares is "accepted of him." He actually is, at that very moment, in a state of acceptance. But he is at present only a *servant* of God, not properly a *son*. Meantime let it be well observed, that *the wrath of God* no longer *abideth on him*.

11. Indeed nearly fifty years ago, when the Preachers commonly called Methodists, began to preach that grand scriptural doctrine, Salvation by Faith, they were not sufficiently apprised of the difference between a servant and a child of God. They did not clearly understand, that even one "who feared God, and worketh righteousness, is accepted of him." In consequence of this, they were apt to make sad the hearts of those whom God hath not made sad. For they frequently asked those who feared God, "Do you know that your sins are forgiven?" And upon their answering, "No," immediately replied, "Then you are a child of the devil." No; that does not follow. It might have been said, (and it is all that can be said with propriety) "Hitherto you are only a *servant*: you are not a *child* of God. You have already great reason to praise God

God that he has called you to his honourable service. Fear not. Continue crying unto him: "and you shall see greater things than these."

12. And indeed, unless the servants of God halt by the way, they will receive the adoption of sons. They will receive the *faith* of the children of God by his *revealing* his only begotten Son in their hearts. Thus, the faith of a child is properly and directly, a divine conviction, whereby every child of God is enabled to testify, "The life that I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." And whosoever hath this, "the Spirit of God witnesseth with his spirit, that he is a child of God." So the Apostle writes to the *Galatians*, "Ye are the sons of God by faith. And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father:" that is, giving you childlike confidence in him, together with a kind affection toward him. This then it is, that (as St. *Paul* was taught of God, and wrote as he was moved by the Holy Ghost,) properly constitutes the difference between a servant of God and a child of God. "He that believeth (as a child of God) hath the witness in himself." This the servant hath not. Yet let no man discourage him: rather lovingly exhort him to expect it every moment!

13. It is easy to observe, that all the sorts of faith which we can conceive, are reducible to one or other of the preceding. But let us covet the best gifts, and follow the most excellent way. There is no reason why you should be satisfied with the faith of a Materialist, a Heathen, or a Deist: nor indeed with that of a servant: I do not know that God requires it at your hands; indeed

indeed if you have received this, you ought not to caſt it away. You ought not in any wiſe to undervalue it, but to be truly thankful for it. Yet in the mean time, beware how you reſt here: preſs on till you receive the Spirit of Adoption. Reſt not, till that ſpirit clearly witneſſes with your ſpirit, that you are a child of God.

II. I proceed in the ſecond place, to draw a few inferences from the proceeding obſervations.

1. And I would firſt infer, in how dreadful a ſtate, if there be a God, is a Materialiſt! One who denies not only the *Lord that bought him*, but alſo the Lord that made him! *Without faith it is impoſſible to pleaſe God:* but it is impoſſible he ſhould have any faith at all; any conviction of any inviſible world; for he believes there is no ſuch thing: any conviction of the being of a God; for a *material* God is no god at all. For you cannot poſſibly ſuppoſe the ſun or ſkies to be God, any more than you can ſuppoſe a god of wood or ſtone. And farther, whoſoever believes all things to be mere matter, muſt of courſe believe, that all things are governed by dire neceſſity? Neceſſity, that is as inexorable as the winds, as ruthleſs as the rocks, as mercileſs as the waves that daſh upon them, or the poor ſhipwrecked mariners! Who then ſhall help thee, thou poor deſolate wretch, when thou art moſt in need of help? Winds, and ſeas, and rocks, and ſtorms! Such are the beſt helpers, which the Materialiſts can hope for!

2. Almoſt equally deſperate is the caſe of the poor *Deiſt*, how learned, yea how moral ſo ever he be. For you likewiſe, though you may not

advert to it, are really *without God in the world.* See your religion, "the religion of nature delineated by the ingenious Mr. *Wollaston:*" (whom I remember to have seen when I was at school, attending the public service at the *Charterhouse* Chapel.) Does he found his religion upon God? Nothing less. He founds it upon truth. Abstract truth. But does he not by that expression mean God? No; he sets him out of the question; and builds a beautiful castle in the air, without being beholden either to him or his word. See your smooth-tongued Orator of *Glasgow*, one of the most pleasing Writers of the age. Has he any more to do with God in his system than Mr. *Wollaston?* Does he deduce his "Idea of Virtue," from him? As the Father of Lights, the Source of all Good? Just the contrary. He not only plans his whole Theory without taking the least notice of God, but toward the close of it proposes that question, "Does the having an eye to God in an action, inhance the virtue of it? He answers, No: it is so far from this, that if in doing a virtuous, that is a benevolent action, a man mingles a desire to please God, the more there is of this desire, the less virtue there is in that action. Never before did I meet with either Jew, Turk, or Heathen, who so flatly renounced God as this Christian Professor!

3. But with Heathens, Mahometans and Jews, we have at present nothing to do: only we may wish that their lives did not shame many of us that are called Christians. We have not much more to do, with the members of the Church of *Rome.* But we cannot doubt that many of them, like the excellent Archbishop of *Cambray*, still retain

retain (notwithstanding many mistakes,) that faith that worketh by love. And how many of the Protestants enjoy this, whether members of the Church, or of other Congregations? We have reason to believe a considerable number, both of one and the other, (and blessed be God an increasing number) in every part of the land.

4. Once more. I exhort you that fear God and work righteousness, you that are servants of God, first, flee from all sin, as from the face of a serpent, being

> "Quick as the apple of an eye,
> The slightest touch of sin to feel:"

and to work righteousness, to the utmost of the power you now have: to abound in works both of piety and mercy: and, secondly, continually to cry to God, that he would reveal his Son in your hearts, to the intent you may be no more servants, but sons: having his love shed abroad in your hearts, and walking in the *glorious liberty of the children of God.*

5. I exhort you, lastly, who already feel the Spirit of God witnessing with your spirit, that you are the children of God, follow the advice of the Apostle, "Walk in all the *good works* whereunto ye are created in Christ Jesus." And then "leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, and not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, go on to perfection." Yea, and when ye have attained a measure of perfect love, when God has *circumcised your hearts*, and enabled you to love him with all your heart and with all your soul; think not of resting there. That is im-

poſſible. You cannot ſtand ſtill: you muſt either riſe or fall; riſe higher or fall lower. Therefore the voice of God to the *children of Iſrael*, to the children of God is, "Go forward." *Forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forward unto thoſe that are before, preſs on to the mark, for the prize of your high calling of God in Chriſt Jeſus.*

SERMON

SERMON CIX.

ON GOD'S VINEYARD.

ISAIAH v. 4.

What could have been done more to my vineyard, that I have not done in it? Wherefore when I looked that it should bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?

THE *vineyard of the Lord*, taking the word in its widest sense, may include the whole world. All the inhabitants of the earth, may in some sense be called *the vineyard of the Lord*, who "hath made all nations of men, to dwell on all the face of the earth, that they might seek the Lord, if haply they may feel after him, and find him." But in a narrower sense the vineyard of the Lord may mean, the Christian World: that is, all that name the name of Christ, and profess to obey his word. In a

ſtill narrower ſenſe, it may be underſtood of what is termed, The Reformed part of the Chriſtian Church. In the narroweſt of all, one may, by that phraſe, The vineyard of the Lord, mean, the body of people commonly called Methodiſts. In this ſenſe I underſtand it now, meaning thereby that Society only, which began at *Oxford*, in the year 1729, and remain united at this day. Underſtanding the word in this ſenſe, I repeat the queſtion which God propoſes to the Prophet, "What could have been done more to my vineyard that I have not done in it? Wherefore, when I looked that it ſhould bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?"

What could God have done more in this his vineyard, (ſuppoſe he had deſigned it ſhould put forth great branches, and ſpread over the earth) which he hath not done in it?

Firſt, With regard to Doctrine:

Secondly, With regard to Scriptural Helps:

Thirdly, With regard to Diſcipline, and

Fourthly, With regard to Outward Protection.

Theſe things being conſidered, I would then briefly enquire, "Wherefore, when he looked it ſhould bring forth grapes, brought it forth wild grapes?"

I. 1. Firſt, What could have been done in this his vineyard, which God hath not done in it? What could have been done more, with regard to *Doctrine?* From the very beginning, from the time that four young men united together, each of them was *homo unius libri:* a man of one book: God taught them all, to make his "word

"word a lanthron unto their feet, and a light in all their paths." They had one, and only one rule of judgment, with regard to all their tempers, words, and actions, namely, the oracles of God. They were one and all determined to be *Bible-Christians*. They were continually reproached for this very thing: some terming them in derision, *Bible-bigots*; others *Bible-moths*: feeding they said, upon the Bible, as moths do upon cloth. And indeed unto this day, it is their constant endeavour to think and speak as the oracles of God.

2. It is true, a learned man, Dr. *Trap*, soon after their setting out gave a very different account of them. "When I saw, said the Doctor, these two books, *The Treatise on Christian perfection*, and the *Serious Call to a Holy Life*, I thought these books will certainly do mischief. And so it proved: for presently after up sprung the Methodists. So he [Mr. *Law*] was their parent." Although this was not entirely true, yet there was some truth in it. All the Methodists carefully read these books, and were greatly profited thereby. Yet they did by no means spring from them, but from the Holy Scriptures; being *born again*, as St. *Peter* speaks, "by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever."

3. Another learned man, the late Bishop *Warburton*, roundly affirms, that "They were the offspring of Mr. *Law*, and Count *Zinzendorf* together." But this was a greater mistake still. For they had met together several years before they had the least acquaintance with Count *Zinzendorf*, or even knew there was such a person in the world. And when they did know him, although they esteemed him very highly in love

love, yet they did not dare to follow him one ſtep farther than they were warranted by the Scripture.

4. The book which, next to the Holy Scripture, was of the greateſt uſe to them, in ſettling their judgment as to the grand point of Juſtification by Faith, was the Book of Homilies. They were never clearly convinced, that we are juſtified by faith alone, till they carefully conſulted theſe, and compared them with the Sacred Writings, particularly St. *Paul's* Epiſtle to the *Romans*. And no Miniſter of the Church, can with any decency oppoſe theſe, ſeeing at his Ordination he ſubſcribed to them, in ſubſcribing the thirty-ſixth Article of the Church.

5. It has been frequently obſerved, that very few were clear in their judgment both with regard to juſtification, and ſanctification. Many who have ſpoken and written admirably well, concerning juſtification, had no clear conception, nay were totally ignorant of the doctrine of ſanctification. Who has wrote more ably than *Martin Luther*, on juſtification by faith alone? And who was more ignorant of the doctrine of ſanctification, or more confuſed in his conceptions of it? In order to be thoroughly convinced of this, of his total ignorance with regard to ſanctification, there needs no more than to read over without prejudice, his celebrated Comment on the Epiſtle to the *Galatians*. On the other hand, how many writers of the *Romiſh* Church, (as *Francis Sales* and *Juan de Caſtaniza* in particular) have wrote ſtrongly and ſcripturally on ſanctification: who nevertheleſs were entirely unacquainted with the nature of juſtification. Inſomuch that the whole body of their Divines at the Council

of

of *Trent* in their *Catechismus ad Parochos* [Catechism which every parish Priest is to teach his people] totally confound sanctification and justification together. But it has pleased God to give the Methodists a full and clear knowledge of each, and the wide difference betwen them.

6. They know indeed, that at the same time a man is justified, sanctification properly begins. For when he is justified, he is "born again, born from above, born of the Spirit:" which although it is not, (as some suppose) the whole process of sanctification, is doubtless the gate of it. Of this likewise God has given them a full view. They know the New Birth implies as great a change in the soul, in him that is *born of the Spirit*, as was wrought in his body, when he was born of a woman: not an outward change only, as from drunkenness to sobriety, from robbery or theft to honesty: (this is the poor, dry, miserable conceit of those that know nothing of real religion) but an inward change, from all unholy, to all holy tempers: from pride to humility, from passionateness to meekness; from peevishness and discontent to patience and resignation: in a word, from an earthly, sensual, devilish mind, to the mind that was in Christ Jesus.

7. It is true, a late very eminent Author, in his strange treatise on Regeneration, proceeds, entirely on the supposition, That it is the whole, gradual progress of sanctification. No: it is only the threshold of sanctification: the first entrance upon it. And as in the Natural Birth, a man is born at once, and then grows larger and stronger by degrees; so in the Spiritual Birth, a man is born at once, and then gradually increases in spiritual stature and strength. The New-Birth

therefore

therefore is the first point of sanctification, which may increase more and more unto the perfect day.

8. It is then a great blessing given to this people, that as they do not think or speak of justification, so as to supersede sanctification, so neither do they think or speak of sanctification, so as to supersede justification. They take care to keep each in its own place, laying equal stress on one and the other. They know God has joined these together, and it is not for man to put them asunder. Therefore they maintain with equal zeal and diligence, the doctrine of free, full, present justification on the one hand, and of entire sanctification both of heart and life on the other. Being as tenacious of inward holiness, as any Mystic, and of outward, as any Pharisee.

9. Who then is a Christian, according to the light which God hath vouchsafed to this people? He that being justified by faith, hath peace with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ: and at the same time, is "born again, born from above, born of the spirit:" inwardly changed from the image of the devil, to that "image of God wherein he was created." He that finds the love of God shed abroad in his heart, by the Holy Ghost which is given unto him; and whom this love sweetly constrains to *love his neighbour*, every man, *as himself*. He that has learned of his Lord to be meek and lowly in heart, and in every state to be content. He in whom is that whole mind, all those tempers, which were also in Christ Jesus. He that abstains from all appearance of evil in his actions, and that *offends not* with *his tongue*. He that walks in all the commandments of God, and in all his ordinances blameless

blameleſs. He that in all his intercourſe with men does to others as he would they ſhould do to him: and in his whole life and converſation, whether he eats or drinks, or whatſoever he doth, doth all to the glory of God.

Now what could God have done more for this his vineyard, which he hath not done in it, with regard to *Doctrine?* We are to enquire,

II. Secondly, What could have been done which he hath not done in it, with regard to *Spiritual Helps?*

1. Let us conſider this matter from the very beginning. Two young Clergymen, not very remarkable any way, of middle age, having a tolerable meaſure of health, though rather weak than ſtrong, began about fifty years ago, to call ſinners to repentance. This they did for a time, in many of the Churches in and about *London*. But two difficulties aroſe; firſt, The Churches were ſo crouded, that many of the pariſhoners could not get in: ſecondly, They preached new doctrines; That we are ſaved by Faith, and, That "without Holineſs no man could ſee the Lord." For one or other of theſe reaſons, they were not long ſuffered to preach in the Churches. They then preached in Moorfields, Kennington-Common, and in many other public places. The fruit of their preaching quickly appeared. Many ſinners were changed both in heart and life. But it ſeemed, this could not continue long; for every one clearly ſaw, theſe Preachers would quickly wear themſelves out: and no Clergyman dared to aſſiſt them. But from one and another, though not ordained offered to aſſiſt them. God gave a ſignal bleſſing to their word. Many ſinners were thoroughly

thoroughly convinced of sin, and many truly converted to God. Their assistants increased both in number and in the success of their labours. Some of them were learned, some unlearned: most of them were young: a few middle-aged: some of them were weak: some, on the contrary, of remarkably strong understanding. But it pleased God to own them all, so that more and more brands were plucked out of the burning.

2. It may be observed, that these Clergymen all this time, had no plan at all. They only went hither and thither, wherever they had a prospect of saving souls from death. But when more and more asked, "What must I do to be saved?" They were desired to meet altogether. Twelve came the first Thursday night; forty, the next; soon after, a hundred. And they continued to increase, till three or four and twenty years ago, the *London* Society amounted to about 2,800.

3. But how should this multitude of people be kept together? And how should it be known, Whether they walked worthy of their profession? They were providentially led, when they were thinking on another thing (namely, paying the public debt) to divide all the people into little companies, or classes, according to their places of abode, and appoint one person in each class, to see all the rest weekly. By this means it was quickly discovered, if any of them lived in any known sin. If they did, they were first admonished: and when judged incorrigible, excluded from the Society.

4. This division of the people, and exclusion of these that walked disorderly, without any respect of persons, were helps which few other communities had. To these, as the Societies increased,

was

was soon added another. The Stewards of the Societies in each district, were desired to meet the Preachers once a quarter in some central place, to give an account of the spiritual and temporal state of their several Societies. The use of these Quarterly-Meetings was soon found to be exceeding great: in consideration of which they were gradually spread to all the Societies in the kingdom.

5. In order to increase the union between the Preachers, (as well as that of the people) they were desired to meet altogether in *London*, and sometime after, a select number of them. Afterwards for more convenience, they met at *London*, *Bristol* and *Leeds* alternately. They spent a few days together in this General Conference: in considering, what might most conduce to the general good. The result was immediately signified to all their brethren. And they soon found, that what St. *Paul* observes of the whole Church, may be in a measure applied to every part of it, "The whole body being fitly framed together, and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, maketh increase of the body, to the edifying of itself in love," Eph. iv. 16.

6. That this may be the more effectually done, they have an other excellent Help in the constant change of Preachers: it being their rule, that no Preacher shall remain in the same Circuit more than two years together: and few of them more than one year. Some indeed have imagined, that this was a hinderance to the work of God. But long experience in every part of the kingdom proves the contrary. This has always shewn, that the people profit less by any

one perſon than by a variety of Preachers: while they

"Uſed the gifts on each beſtowed,
Temper'd by the art of God."

7. Together with theſe Helps, which are peculiar to their own Society, they have all thoſe which are enjoyed in common by the other members of the Church of *England*. Indeed they have been long preſſed to ſeparate from it, to which they have had temptations of every kind. But they cannot, they dare not, they will not ſeparate from it, while they can remain therein with a clear conſcience. It is true, if any ſinful terms of communion were impoſed upon them, then they would be conſtrained to ſeparate: but as this is not the caſe at preſent, we rejoice to continue therein.

8. What then could God have done more for his vineyard, which he hath not done in it, with regard to Spiritual Helps? He has hardly dealt ſo with any other people in the Chriſtian world! If it be ſaid, He could have made them a ſeparate people, like the *Moravian* Brethren. I anſwer, This would have been a direct contradiction to his whole deſign in raiſing them up: namely, to ſpread Scriptural Religion throughout the land, among people of every denomination, leaving every one to hold his own opinions, and to follow his own mode of worſhip. This could only be done effectually, by leaving theſe things as they were, and endeavouring to leaven the whole nation with that *faith that worketh by love*.

III. 1. Such are the *Spiritual Helps* which God has beſtowed on this his vineyard, with no ſparing

ſparing hand. *Diſcipline* might be inſerted among theſe: but we may as well ſpeak of it under a ſeparate head. It is certain, that in this reſpect the Methodiſts are a highly favoured people. Nothing can be more ſimple, nothing more rational, than the Methodiſt Diſcipline: it is entirely founded on Common Senſe, particularly applying the general rules of Scripture. Any perſon determined to ſave his ſoul, may be united, (this is the only condition required) with them. But this deſire muſt be evidenced by three marks; avoiding all known ſin; doing good after his power, and attending all the ordinances of God. He is then placed in ſuch a Claſs as is convenient for him, where he ſpends about an hour in a week. And the next quarter, if nothing is objected to him, he is admitted into the Society. And therein he may continue, as long as he continues to meet his brethren, and walks according to his profeſſion.

2. Their Public Service is at five in the morning, and ſix or ſeven in the evening, that their temporal buſineſs may not be hindered. Only on Sunday it begins between nine and ten, and concludes with the Lord's Supper. On Sunday evening the Society meets: but care is taken to diſmiſs them early, that all the heads of families may have time to inſtruct their ſeveral houſholds. Once a quarter the principal Preacher in every Circuit examines every member of the Societies therein. By this means, if the behaviour of any one is blameable, which is frequently to be expected in ſo numerous a body of people, it is eaſily diſcovered, and either the offence or the offender removed in time.

3. Whenever it is needful to exclude any disorderly member out of the Society, it is done in the moſt quiet and inoffenſive manner; only by not renewing his ticket, at the Quarterly Viſitation. But in ſome caſes, where the offence is great, and there is danger of public ſcandal, it is judged neceſſary to declare when all the members are preſent, "A. B. is no longer a member of our Society." Now what can be more rational or more ſcriptural, than this ſimple Diſcipline? Attended from the beginning to the end with no trouble, expence or delay?

IV. 1. But was it poſſible that all theſe things ſhould be done, without a flood of oppoſition? The prince of this world was not dead, nor aſleep: and would he not fight, that his kingdom might not be delivered up? If the word of the Apoſtle be found true, in all ages and nations, "All they that will live godly in Chriſt Jeſus, ſhall ſuffer perſecution." If this be true with regard to every individual Chriſtian, how much more, with regard to bodies of men, viſibly united together, with the avowed deſign, to overthrow his kingdom? And what could withſtand the perſecution he would not fail to ſtir up, againſt a poor, defenceleſs, deſpiſed people, without any viſible help, without money, without power, without friends?

2. In truth the god of this world was not aſleep. Neither was he idle: he *did* fight, and that with all his power, that his kingdom might not be delivered up. He "brought forth all his hoſts to war." Firſt, he ſtirred up the beaſts of the people. They roared like lions: they encompaſſed the little and defenceleſs on every ſide. And the

ſtorm

ſtorm roſe higher and higher, till deliverance came, in a way that none expected. God ſtirred up the heart of our late gracious Sovereign, to give ſuch orders to his Magiſtrates, as being put in execution, effectually quelled the madneſs of the people. It was about the ſame time that a great man applied perſonally to his Majeſty, begging that he would pleaſe to "take a courſe to ſtop theſe run-about Preachers." His Majeſty looking ſternly upon him, anſwered without ceremony, like a King, "I tell you, while I ſit on the throne, no man ſhall be perſecuted for conſcience ſake."

3. But in defiance of this, ſeveral who bore his Majeſty's Commiſſion, have perſecuted them from time to time: and that under colour of law, availing themſelves of what is called the Conventicle Act: one in particular, in *Kent*, who ſome years ſince took upon him to fine one of the preachers and ſeveral of his hearers. But they thought it their duty to appeal to his Majeſty's Court of King's Bench. The cauſe was given for the plaintiffs, who have ever ſince been permitted to worſhip God according to their own conſcience?

4. I believe, this is a thing wholly without precedent: I find no other inſtance of it, in any age of the Church, from the day of Pentecoſt to this day. Every opinion right and wrong, has been tolerated, almoſt in every age and nation. Every mode of worſhip has been tolerated, however ſuperſtitious or abſurd. But I do not know, that true, vital, ſcriptural Religion was ever tolerated before. For this the people called Methodiſts, have abundant reaſon to praiſe God. In their favour, he hath wrought a new thing in

the earth: he hath ſtilled the enemy and the avenger. This then they muſt aſcribe unto Him, the author of their outward as well as inward peace.

V. 1. What indeed could God have done more for this his vineyard, which he hath not done in it? This having been largely ſhewed, we may now proceed to that ſtrong and tender expoſtulation, After all that I had done, might I not have looked for the moſt excellent grapes, wherefore then brought it forth wild grapes? Might I not have expected a general increaſe of faith and love, of righteouſneſs and true holineſs? Yea, and of the fruit of the Spirit, love, joy, peace, long-ſuffering, meekneſs, gentleneſs, fidelity, goodneſs, temperance? Was it not reaſonable to expect that theſe fruits would have overſpread his whole Church? Truly when I ſaw what God had done among his people between forty and fifty years ago, when I ſaw them warm in their firſt love, magnifying the Lord and rejoicing in God their Saviour, I could expect nothing leſs than that all theſe would have lived like angels here below: that they would have walked as continually ſeeing him that is inviſible, having conſtant communion with the Father and the Son, living in eternity and walking in eternity. I looked to ſee "a choſen generation, a royal prieſthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people," in the whole tenor of their converſation "ſhewing forth his praiſe, who had called them into his marvellous light."

2. But inſtead of this it brought forth wild grapes: fruit of a quite contrary nature. It brought forth Error in ten thouſand ſhapes, turning

turning many of the simple out of the way. It brought forth Enthusiasm, imaginary Inspiration, ascribing to the all-wise God, all the wild, absurd, self-inconsistent dreams of an heated imagination. It brought forth pride, robbing the Giver of every good gift of the honour due to his name. It brought forth prejudice, evil-surmising, censoriousness, judging and condemning one another: all totally subversive of that brotherly love, which is the very badge of the Christian profession: without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before God. It brought forth anger, hatred, malice, revenge, and every evil word and work: all direful fruits, not of the Holy Spirit, but of the bottomless pit.

3. It brought forth likewise in many, particularly, those that are increased in goods, that grand poison of souls, the love of the world, and that in all its branches: *the desire of the flesh*, that is, the seeking happiness in the pleasures of sense: *the desire of the eyes*, that is, seeking happiness in dress, or any of the pleasures of imagination: and *the pride of life*, that is, seeking happiness in the praise of men: or in that which ministers to all these, laying up treasures on earth. It brought forth self-indulgence of every kind, delicacy, effeminacy, softness: but not softness of the right kind, that melts at human woe. It brought such base grovelling affections, such deep earthly-mindedness, as that of the poor Heathens, which occasioned the lamentation of their own Poet over them,

O curvæ in terras animæ & cælestium inanes!

'O souls bowed down to earth, and void of God!'

4. O ye

4. O ye that have riches in poſſeſſion, once more hear the word of the Lord! Ye that are rich in this world, that have food to eat, and raiment to put on, and ſomething over. Are you clear of the curſe? Of loving the world? Are you ſenſible of your danger? Do you feel, How hardly will they that have riches enter into the kingdom of heaven? Do you continue unburnt in the midſt of the fire? Are you untouched with the love of the world? Are you clear from the deſire of the fleſh, the deſire of the eyes, and the pride of life? Do you *put a knife to your throat* when you ſit down to meat, leſt your *table* ſhould *be a ſnare to you?* Is not your belly your god? Is not eating and drinking, or any other pleaſure of ſenſe the greateſt pleaſure you enjoy? Do not you ſeek happineſs in dreſs, furniture, pictures, gardens: or any thing elſe that pleaſes the eye? Do not you grow ſoft and delicate? Unable to bear cold, heat, the wind or the rain, as you did when you were poor? Are you not increaſing in goods, laying up treaſures on earth: inſtead of reſtoring to God in the poor, not ſo much, or ſo much, but all that you can ſpare? Surely "it is eaſier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven!"

5. But why will ye ſtill bring forth wild grapes? What excuſe can ye make? Hath God been wanting on *his* part? Have you not been warned over and over? Have ye not been fed with the ſincere milk of the word? Hath not the whole word of God been delivered to you, and without any mixture of error? Were not the fundamental doctrines both of free, full, preſent Juſtification delivered to you, as well as Sanctification, both

both gradual and inſtantaneous? Was not every branch both of inward and outward Holineſs clearly opened and earneſtly applied? And that by Preachers of every kind, young and old, learned and unlearned. But it is well if ſome of you did not deſpiſe the helps which God had prepared for you. Perhaps you would hear none but Clergymen: or at leaſt, none but men of learning. Will you not then give God leave, to chuſe his own meſſengers? To ſend by whom he *will* ſend? It is well if this bad wiſdom was not one cauſe of your "bringing forth wild grapes?"

6. Was not another cauſe of it, your deſpiſing that excellent Help, Union with a Chriſtian Society! Have you not read, "How can one be warm alone?" and "Woe be unto him that is alone when he falleth?" "But you have companions enough." Perhaps more than enough; more than are helpful to your ſoul; but have you enough that are athirſt for God? and that labour to make *you* ſo? Have you companions enough, that watch over your ſoul, as they that muſt give account? And that freely and faithfully warn you, if you take any falſe ſtep, or are in danger of doing ſo? I fear, you have few of theſe companions, or elſe you would bring forth better fruit.

7. If you are a member of the Society, do you make a full uſe of your privilege? Do you never fail to meet your Claſs? And that not as matter of form, but expecting that when you are met together in his name, your Lord will be in the midſt of you? Are you truly thankful for the amazing Liberty of Conſcience, which is vouchſafed to you and your Brethren? Such as never

was

was enjoyed before, by perſons in your circumſtances. And are you thankful to the Giver of every good gift, for the general ſpread of true Religion? Surely you can never praiſe God enough for all theſe bleſſings, ſo plentifully ſhowered down upon you, till you praiſe him with angels and archangels, and all the company of heaven.

SERMON

SERMON CX.

ON RICHES.

MATTHEW xix. 24.

It is eaſier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.

1. IN the preceding verſes we have an account of a *young man*, who *came running* to our Lord, *and kneeling down*, not in hypocriſy, but in deep earneſtneſs of ſoul, and ſaid unto him, "Good Maſter, what good thing ſhall I do, that I may have eternal life? All the commandments, *ſaith he*, I have kept from my youth: what lack I yet?" Probably he had kept them in the literal ſenſe: yet he ſtill loved the world. And he who knew what was in man, knew that in this particular caſe (for this is by no means a general rule) he could not be healed of that deſperate diſeaſe,

diſeaſe, but by a deſperate remedy. Therefore he anſwered, "Go and ſell all that thou haſt, and give it to the poor, and come and follow me. But when he heard this, he went away ſorrowful: for he had great poſſeſſions." So all the fair bloſſoms withered away! For he would not lay up treaſure in heaven at ſo high a price! *Jeſus*, obſerving this, "looked round about and ſaid unto his diſciples (Mark x. 23, &c.) how hardly ſhall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! It is eaſier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God. And they were aſtoniſhed out of meaſure, and ſaid among themſelves, Who then can be ſaved?" If it be ſo difficult for rich men to be ſaved, who have ſo many and ſo great advantages! Who are free from the cares of this world, and a thouſand difficulties, to which the poor are continually expoſed?

2. It has indeed been ſuppoſed, he partly retracts what he had ſaid, concerning the difficulty of rich men's being ſaved, by what is added in the tenth chapter of St. *Mark*. For after he had ſaid, (ver. 23) "How hardly ſhall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God:" when *the diſciples were aſtoniſhed at his words*, *Jeſus* anſwered again, and ſaid unto them, *How hard is it* for them that truſt in riches *to enter into the kingdom of God?* (ver. 24.) But obſerve, 1. Our Lord did not mean hereby, to retract what he had ſaid before. So far from it, that he immediately confirms it, by that awful declaration, "It is eaſier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." Obſerve, 2. Both one of theſe

these sentences and the other assert the very same thing. For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for those that *have riches* not to *trust* in them.

3. Perceiving their astonishment at this hard saying, *Jesus looked upon them*, (undoubtedly with an air of inexpressible tenderness, to prevent their thinking the case of the rich desperate) *With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible.*

4. I apprehend, by a rich man here is meant, not only a man that has immense treasures, one that has heaped up gold as dust, and silver as the sand of the sea: but any one that possesses more than the necessaries and conveniencies of life. One that has food and raiment sufficient for himself and his family, and something over, is rich. By the kingdom of God, or of heaven (exactly equivalent terms) I believe is meant, (not the kingdom of glory, although that will without question follow,) but the kingdom of heaven, that is, true Religion upon earth. The meaning then of our Lord's assertion is this, That it is absolutely impossible, unless by that power to which all things are possible, that a rich man should be a Christian: to have the mind that was in Christ, and to walk as Christ walked. Such are the hindrances to Holiness, as well as the temptations to Sin which surround him on every side.

I. First, Such are the hindrances to holiness, which surround him on every side. To enumerate all these would require a large volume: I would only touch upon a few of them.

1. The root of all Religion is *faith*, without which it is impossible to please God. Now whe-

ther you take this in its general acceptation, for an *evidence of things not seen*, of the invisible and the eternal world, of God and the things of God: how natural a tendency have riches to darken this evidence, to prevent your attention to God and the things of God, and to things invisible and eternal! And if you take it in another sense, for a confidence, what a tendency have riches to destroy this? To make you trust, either for happiness or defence, in them, not *in the living God?* Or if you take faith in the proper Christian sense, as a divine confidence in a pardoning God, what a deadly, what an almost insuperable hindrance to this faith are riches? What! Can a wealthy, and consequently an honourable man, come to God, as having nothing to pay? Can he lay all his greatness by, and come as a sinner, a mere sinner, the vilest of sinners! As on a level with those that feed the dogs of his flock! With that *beggar*, who "lies at his gate full of sores?" Impossible, unless by the same power that made the heavens and the earth. Yet without doing this, he cannot in any sense "enter into the kingdom of God."

2. What a hindrance are riches to the very first fruit of faith, namely the love of God? "If any man love the world," says the Apostle, "the love of the Father is not in him." But how is it possible for a man, not to love the world, who is surrounded with all its allurements? How can it be, that he should then hear the still small voice, which says, "My son give me thy heart?" What power less than Almighty, can send the rich man an answer to that prayer,

"Keep

"Keep me dead to all below,
Only Chriſt reſolved to know:
Firm, and diſengag'd and free,
Seeking all my bliſs in Thee!"

3. Riches are equally a hindrance to the loving our neighbour as ourſelves, that is, to the loving all mankind, as Chriſt loved us. A rich man may indeed love them that are of his own party, or his own opinion. He may love them that love him; "do not even Heathens, baptized or unbaptized the ſame?" But he cannot have pure, diſintereſted good-will to every child of man. This can only ſpring from the love of God, which his great poſſeſſions expelled from his ſoul.

4. From the love of God, and from no other fountain, true humility likewiſe flows. Therefore ſo far as they hinder the love of God, riches muſt hinder humility likewiſe. They hinder this alſo in the rich, by cutting them off from that freedom of converſation, whereby they might be made ſenſible of their defects, and come to a true knowledge of themſelves. But how ſeldom do they meet with a faithful friend; with one that can and will deal plainly with them? And without this, we are likely to grow grey in our faults; yea, to die

"With all our imperfections on our head."

5. Neither can meekneſs ſubſiſt without humility; for "of pride naturally cometh contention." Our Lord accordingly directs us to learn of Him at the ſame time "to be meek and lowly in heart." Riches therefore are as great a hindrance to meekneſs as they are to humility; in preventing lowlineſs of mind, they of conſequence prevent

meekneſs, which increaſes in the ſame proportion as we ſink in our own eſteem; and on the contrary, neceſſarily decreaſes as we think more highly of ourſelves.

6. There is another Chriſtian temper which is nearly allied to meekneſs and humility. But it has hardly a name. St *Paul* terms it, Ἐπιείκια. Perhaps till we find a better name, we may call it *yieldingneſs*: a readineſs to ſubmit to others, to give up our own will. This ſeems to be the quality which St. *James* aſcribes to the *wiſdom from above*, when he ſtiles it ἐυπειθὴς, which we render *eaſy to be intreated; eaſy to be convinced* of what is true; *eaſy to be perſuaded*. But how rarely is this amiable temper to be found in a wealthy man! I do not know that I have found ſuch a prodigy ten times, in above threeſcore and ten years.

7. And how uncommon a thing is it, to find patience in thoſe that have large poſſeſſions! Unleſs when there is a counterbalance of long and ſevere affliction with which God is frequently pleaſed to viſit thoſe he loves, as an antidote to their riches. This is not uncommon: he often ſends pain and ſickneſs, and great croſſes, to them that have great poſſeſſions. By theſe means "patience has its perfect work, till they are perfect and entire, lacking nothing."

II. Such are ſome of the hindrances to Holineſs, which ſurround the rich on every ſide! We may now obſerve on the other ſide, what a temptation riches are, to all unholy tempers.

1. And firſt, how great is the temptation to *Atheiſm*, which naturally flows from riches; even to an entire forgetfulneſs of God, as if there was

was no such Being in the universe? This is at present usually termed *Dissipation*, a pretty name, affixt by the great Vulgar, to an utter disregard for God, and indeed for the whole invisible world. And how is the rich man surrounded with all manner of temptations to continual Dissipation! Yes, how is the Art of Dissipation studied among the rich and great! As *Prior* keenly says,

"Cards are dealt and Dice are brought
Happy effects of human wit,
That Alma may herself forget."

Say rather,

"That mortals may their God forget!"

That they may keep Him utterly out of their thoughts, who though he sitteth on the circle of the heavens, yet is about their "bed, and about their path, and spieth out all their ways." Call this wit, if you please: but is it wisdom? O no! It is far, very far from it! Thou fool, dost thou imagine, because thou dost not see God, that God doth not see thee? Laugh on! Play on! Sing on! Dance on! But "for all these things God will bring thee to judgment!"

2. From Atheism there is an easy transition to *Idolatry*: from the worship of no God to the worship of false gods: and in fact, he that does not love God (which is his proper and his only proper worship) will surely love some of the works of his hands; will love the creature if not the Creator. But to how many species of Idolatry is every rich man exposed? What continual and almost insuperable temptations is he under to *love the world?* And that in all its branches? "The desire of the flesh, the desire

of the eyes, and the pride of life." What innumerable temptations will he find, to gratify the *deſire of the fleſh?* Underſtand this right. It does not refer to one only, but all the outward ſenſes. It is equal idolatry, to ſeek our happineſs in gratifying any or all of theſe. But there is the greateſt danger, leſt men ſhould ſeek it in gratifying our taſte: in a moderate ſenſuality: in a regular kind of Epicuriſm: not in gluttony, or drunkenneſs: far be that from them? They do not diſorder the body: they only keep the ſoul dead; dead to God and all true Religion.

3. The rich are equally ſurrounded with temptations from *the deſire of the eyes*, that is, the ſeeking happineſs in gratifying the imagination, the pleaſures of which the eyes chiefly miniſter. The objects that give pleaſure to the imagination are grand, or beautiful, or new. Indeed all rich men have not a taſte for grand objects: but they have for new and beautiful things: eſpecially for new: the deſire of novelty being as natural to men, as the deſire of meat and drink. Now how numerous are the temptations to this kind of idolatry, which naturally ſprings from riches? How ſtrongly and continually are they ſolicited to ſeek happineſs, (if not in grand, yet) in beautiful houſes, in elegant furniture, in curious pictures, in delightful gardens? Perhaps in that triſle of all triſles, rich or gay apparel? Yea, in every new thing, little or great, which Faſhion, the miſtreſs of fools recommends? How are rich men, of a more elevated turn of mind tempted, to ſeek happineſs, as their various taſtes lead, in poetry, hiſtory, muſic, philoſophy, or curious arts and ſciences! Now although it is certain all theſe have their uſe, and therefore

may

may innocently be perused, yet the seeking happiness in any of them instead of God, is manifest idolatry. And therefore were it only on this account that riches furnish him with the means of indulging all these desires, it might well be asked, *Is not the life of a* rich *man* (above all others) *a temptation upon earth?*

4. What temptation likewise must every rich man have, to seek happiness in *the pride of life?* I do not conceive the Apostle to mean thereby pomp, or state, or equipage: so much as *the honour that cometh of men*, whether it be deserved or not. A rich man is sure to meet with this: it is a snare he cannot escape. The whole city of *London* uses the words *rich* and *good* as equivalent terms. "Yes, say they, He is a good man; he is worth a hundred thousand pounds." And indeed every where, if *thou doſt well unto thyself, if thou* increasest in goods, *men will speak well of thee.* All the world is agreed,

"A thousand pounds supplies
The want of twenty thousand qualities."

And who can bear general applause, without being puffed up! Without being insensibly induced to think of himself *more highly than he ought to think?*

5. How is it possible that a rich man should escape pride, were it only on this account, that his situation necessarily occasions praise to flow in upon him from every quarter. For praise is generally poison to the soul; and the more pleasing, the more fatal; particularly when it is undeserved. So that well might our Poet say,

"Parent of evil, bane of honest deeds,
Pernicious flattery! Thy destructive seeds

In

In an ill hour, and by a fatal hand
Sadly diffafed o'er virtue's gleby land,
With riling pride amid the corn appear,
And check the hope and promife of the year!"

And not only praife, whether deferved or undeferved, but every thing about him tends to inſpire and increafe pride. His noble houſe, his elegant furniture, his well-choſen pictures, his fine horſes, his equipage, his very dreſs, yea, even "the embroidery plaiſtered on his tail;" all theſe will be matter of commendation to ſome or other of his gueſts, and ſo have an almoſt irreſiſtible tendency to make him think himſelf a better man, than thoſe who have not theſe advantages.

6. How naturally likewiſe do riches feed and increaſe the *ſelf-will* which is born in every child of man! As not only his domeſtic ſervants and immediate dependants, are governed implicitly by his will, finding their account therein, but alſo moſt of his neighbours and acquaintance ſtudy to oblige him in all things; ſo his will being continually indulged, will of courſe be continually ſtrengthened, till at length he will be ill able to ſubmit to the will either of God or men.

7. Such a tendency have riches to beget and nouriſh every temper that is contrary to the love of God. And they have equal tendency to feed every paſſion and temper that is contrary to the love of our neighbour; *contempt*, for inſtance, particularly of inferiors, than which nothing is more contrary to love. *Reſentment* of any real or ſuppoſed offence; perhaps even *revenge*, though God claims this as his own peculiar prerogative; at leaſt *anger*: for it immediately riſes in the mind

mind of a rich man, "What, to use *me* thus! Nay, but he shall soon know better; I am now able to do myself justice."

8. Nearly related to anger, if not rather a species of it, are *fretfulness* and *peevishness*. But are the rich more assaulted by these than the poor? All experience shews that they are, one remarkable instance I was a witness of many years ago. A gentleman of large fortune, while we were seriously conversing, ordered a servant to throw some coals on the fire, a puff of smoke came out. He threw himself back in his chair and cried out, "O Mr. *Wesley*, these are the crosses which I meet with every day!" I could not help asking, "Pray, Sir *John*, are these the heaviest crosses you meet with?" Surely these crosses would not have fretted him so much, if he had had fifty instead of five thousand pounds a year!

9. But it would not be strange, if rich men were in general void of all good dispositions, and an easy prey to all evil ones, since so few of them pay any regard to that solemn declaration of our Lord, without observing which we cannot be his disciples. *And he said unto them all*, the whole multitude, not unto his Apostles only, "If any man will come after me, *will be a real Christian*, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me," Luke ix. 23. O how hard a saying is this, to those that are at ease "in the midst of their possessions!" Yet the scripture cannot be broken. Therefore unless a man do *deny himself* every pleasure which does not prepare him for taking pleasure in God, *and take up his cross daily*: obey every command of God, however grievous to flesh and blood, he

he cannot be a disciple of Christ, he cannot *enter into the kingdom of God.*

10. Touching this important point, of "denying ourselves, and taking up our cross daily," let us appeal to matter of fact; let us appeal to every man's conscience in the sight of God. How many rich men are there among the Methodists (observe there was not one, when they were first joined together!) who actually do "deny themselves and take up their cross daily?" Who resolutely abstain from every pleasure, either of sense or imagination, unless they know by experience, that it prepares them for taking pleasure in God? Who declines no cross, no labour or pain, which lies in the way of his duty? Who of you that are now rich, deny yourselves just as you did when you were poor? Who as willingly endure labour or pain now, as you did when you were not worth five pounds? Come to particulars. Do you fast now as often as you did then? Do you rise as early in the morning? Do you endure cold or heat, wind or rain, as cheerfully as ever? See one reason among many, why so few increase in goods, without decreasing in grace! Because they no longer deny themselves and take up their daily cross. They no longer, alas! endure hardship, as good soldiers of Jesus Christ!

11. "Go to now, ye rich men! Weep and howl for the miseries that are coming upon you." That must come upon you in a few days, unless prevented by a deep and entire change! "The canker of your gold and silver will be a testimony against *you*, and will eat your flesh as fire." O how pitiable is your condition! And who is able to help you? You need more plain dealing than

any

any men in the world. And you meet with less: For how few dare speak as plain *to you*, as they would do to one of your servants? No man living that either hopes to gain any thing by your favour, or fears to lose any thing by your displeasure. O that God would give me acceptable words, and cause them to sink deep into your hearts! Many of you have known me long, well nigh from your infancy! You have frequently helped me, when I stood in need. May I not say you loved me? But now the time of our parting is at hand; my feet are just stumbling upon the dark mountains. I would leave one word with you, before I go hence: and you may remember it, when I am no more seen.

12. O let your heart be whole with God! Seek your happiness in him and him alone. Beware that you cleave not to the dust! *This* earth *is not your place.* See that you use this world as not abusing it; *use* the world, and *enjoy* God. Sit as loose to all things here below, as if you was a poor beggar. Be a good steward of the manifold gifts of God, that when you are called to give an account of your stewardship, He may say, "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!"

SERMON

SERMON CXI.

WHAT IS MAN?

PSALM viii. 4.

What is Man?

1. NAY, what am I? With God's assistance, I would consider myself. Here is a curious machine, "fearfully and wonderfully made." It is a little portion of *Earth*, the particles of which cohering, I know not how, lengthen into innumerable fibres, a thousand times finer than hairs. These crossing each other in all directions, are strangely wrought into membranes: And these membranes are as strangely wrought into arteries, veins, nerves, and glands; all of which contain various fluids, constantly circulating through the whole machine.

2. In order to the continuance of this circulation, a considerable quantity of *Air* is necessary. And this is continually taken into the habit, by an engine fitted for that very purpose. But

But as a particle of ethereal *Fire* is connected with every particle of air, (and a particle of water too,) ſo both air, water, and fire, are received into the lungs together, where the fire is ſeparated from the air and water, both of which are continually thrown out, while the fire extracted from them, is received into, and mingled with, the blood. Thus the human body is compoſed of all the four elements, duly proportioned and mixt together: The laſt of which conſtitutes the vital flame, whence flows the animal heat.

3. Let me conſider this yet a little farther. Is not the primary uſe of the lungs to adminiſter fire to the body, which is continually extracted from the air, by that curious fire-pump? By inſpiration it takes in the air, water, and fire together. In its numerous cells, (commonly called air-veſſels,) it detaches the fire from the air and water. This then mixes with the blood, as every air-veſſel has a blood-veſſel connected with it: And as ſoon as the fire is extracted from it, the air and water are thrown out by expiration.

4. Without this ſpring of life, this vital fire, there could be no circulation of the blood: Conſequently no motion of any of the fluids, of the nervous fluid in particular: (if it be not rather, as is highly probable, this very fire we are ſpeaking of.) Therefore there could not be any ſenſation; nor any muſcular motion: I ſay there could be no circulation; for the cauſe uſually aſſigned for this, namely, the force of the heart, is altogether inadequate to the ſuppoſed effect. No one ſuppoſes the force of the heart in a ſtrong man to be more than equal to the weight

of three thouſand pounds. Whereas it would require a force equal to the weight of a hundred thouſand pounds, to propel the blood from the heart through all the arteries. This can only be effected by the ethereal fire contained in the blood itſelf, aſſiſted by the elaſtic force of the arteries through which it circulates.

5. But beſide this ſtrange compound of the four elements, earth, water, air, and fire, I find ſomething in me of a quite different nature, nothing akin to any of theſe. I find ſomething in me that *thinks*, which neither earth, water, air, fire, nor any mixture of them, can poſſibly do? Something which ſees, and hears, and ſmells, and taſtes, and feels, all which are ſo many modes of thinking: It goes farther; having perceived objects by any of theſe ſenſes, it forms inward ideas of them. It *judges* concerning them, it ſees whether they agree or diſagree with each other. It *reaſons* concerning them, that is, infers one propoſition from another. It *reflects* upon its own operations. It is endued with imagination and memory: And any of its operations, judgment in particular, may be ſubdivided into many others.

6. But by what means ſhall I learn, in what part of my body this thinking principle is lodged? Some eminent men have affirmed, That it is "all in all, and all in every part." But I learn nothing from this: They ſeem to be words that have no determinate meaning. Let us then appeal, in the beſt manner we can, to our own experience. From this I learn, that this thinking principle is not lodged in my hands, or feet, or legs, or arms.

It

It is not lodged in the trunk of my body. Any one may be assured of this by a little reflection. I cannot conceive that it is situated in my bones, or in any part of my flesh. So far as I can judge, it seems to be situated in some part of my head. But whether in the pineal gland, or in any part of the brain, I am not able to determine.

7. But farther. This inward principle, wherever it is lodged, is capable not only of thinking, but likewise of love, hatred, joy, sorrow, desire, fear, hope, &c. and a whole train of other inward emotions, which are commonly called *Passions* or *Affections*. They are stiled, by a general appellation, *the Will*, and are mixed and diversified a thousand ways. And they seem to be the only spring of action, in that inward principles I call *the Soul*.

8. But what is my *soul?* It is an important question, and not eafy to be resolved.

"Hear'st thou submissive, but a lowly birth?
Some separate particles of finer earth?
A plain effect, which nature must beget,
As motion dictates, and as atoms meet?"

I cannot in any wise believe this. My reason recoils at it. I cannot reconcile myself to the thought, that the soul is either earth, water, or fire: Or a composition of all of them put together: Were it only for this plain reason—All these, whether separate or compounded in any possible way, are purely *passive* still. None of them has the least power of self-motion; none of them can move itself. "But (says one,) does not that ship move."

Yes, but not of itſelf; it is moved by the water on which it ſwims. "But then the water moves." True, but the water is moved by the wind, the current of air. "But the air moves." It is moved by the ethereal fire, which is attached to every particle of it. And this fire itſelf is moved by the Almighty Spirit, the ſource of all the motion in the univerſe. But my ſoul has from Him an inward principle of motion, whereby it governs at pleaſure every part of the body.

9. It governs every motion of the body: Only with this exception, which is a marvellous inſtance of the wiſe and gracious Providence of the great Creator. There are ſome motions of the body, which are abſolutely needful for the continuance of life: Such as the dilation and contraction of the lungs, the ſyſtole and diaſtole of the heart, the pulſation of the arteries, and the circulation of the blood. Theſe are not governed by me at pleaſure: They do not wait the direction of my will. And it is well they do not. It is highly proper, that all the vital motions ſhould be involuntary, going on whether we advert to them or not. Were it otherwiſe, grievous inconveniencies might follow. A man might put an end to his own life whenever he pleaſed, by ſuſpending the motion of his heart or of his lungs: Or he might loſe his life by mere inattention, by not remembering, not adverting to the circulation of his blood. But theſe vital motions being excepted, I direct the motion of my whole body. By a ſingle act of my will, I put my head, eyes, hands, or any part of my body into motion: Although I no more comprehend how I do this, than I can comprehend,

comprehend, how the "Three that bear record in heaven are One."

10. But what am *I?* Unqueſtionably I am ſomething diſtinct from my body. It ſeems evident, that my body is not neceſſarily included therein. For when my body dies I ſhall not die: I ſhall exiſt as really as I did before. And I cannot but believe, this ſelf moving, thinking principle, with all its paſſions and affections, will continue to exiſt, although the body be mouldered into duſt. Indeed at preſent this body is ſo intimately connected with the ſoul, that I ſeem to conſiſt of both. In my preſent ſtate of exiſtence, I undoubtedly conſiſt both of ſoul and body. And ſo I ſhall again after the reſurrection to all eternity.

11. I am conſcious to myſelf of one more property, commonly called *Liberty*. This is very frequently confounded with the *Will*; but is of a very different nature. Neither is it a property of the will, but a diſtinct property of the ſoul, capable of being exerted with regard to all the faculties of the ſoul, as well as all the motions of the body. It is a power of ſelf-determination, which although it does not extend to all our thoughts and imaginations, yet extends to our words and actions in general, and not with many exceptions. I am full as certain of this, that I am free, with reſpect to theſe, to ſpeak or not to ſpeak, to act or not to act, to do this or the contrary, as I am of my own exiſtence. I have not only what is termed, a *liberty of contradiction*, a power to do or not to do, but what is termed, a *liberty of contrariety* a power to act one way, or the contrary: To deny this would be to deny the conſtant experience of all human

kind. Every one feels that he has an inherent power, to move this or that part of his body, to move it or not, and to move this way or the contrary, juſt as he pleaſes. I can, as I chuſe, (and ſo can every one that is born of a woman,) open or ſhut my eyes, ſpeak or be ſilent, riſe or ſit down, ſtretch out my hand, or draw it in, and uſe any of my limbs according to my pleaſure, as well as my whole body. And although I have not an abſolute power over my own mind, becauſe of the corruption of my own nature, yet through the grace of God aſſiſting me, I have a power to chuſe and do good, as well as evil. I am free to chuſe whom I will ſerve, and if I chuſe the better part, to continue therein even unto death.

12. "But tell me, frighted nature, what is death?
Blood only ſtopt, and interrupted breath?
The utmoſt limit of a narrow ſpan?
And end of motion, which with life began?"

Death is properly the ſeparation of the ſoul from the body. Of this we are certain: But we are not certain, (at leaſt in many caſes,) of the time when this ſeparation is made. Is it when reſpiration ceaſes, according to the well-known maxim, *Nullus ſpiritus, nulla vita:* "Where there is no breath, there is no life?" Nay, we cannot abſolutely affirm this: For many inſtances have been known, of thoſe whoſe breath was totally loſt, and yet their lives have been recovered. Is it when the heart no longer beats? Or when the circulation of the blood ceaſes? Not

Not ſo. For the heart may beat anew; and the circulation of the blood, after it is quite interrupted, may begin again. Is the ſoul ſeparated from the body, when the whole body is ſtiff and cold as a piece of ice? But there have been ſeveral inſtances lately of perſons who were thus cold and ſtiff, and had no ſymptoms of life remaining; who nevertheleſs, upon proper application, recovered both life and health. Therefore we can ſay no more, than that death is the ſeparation of the ſoul and body: But in many caſes, God only can tell the moment of that ſeparation.

13. But what we are much more concerned to know, and deeply to conſider is, the end of life: For what end is life beſtowed upon the children of men? Why were we ſent into the world? For one ſole end, and for no other, To prepare for eternity. For this alone we live: For this, and no other purpoſe, is our life either given or continued. It pleaſed the all-wiſe God, at the ſeaſon which he ſaw beſt, to ariſe in the greatneſs of his ſtrength, and create the heavens and the earth, and all things that are therein. Having prepared all things for him, "He created man in his own image, after his own likeneſs." And what was the end of his creation? It was one and no other—That he might know, and love, and enjoy, and ſerve his great Creator to all eternity.

14. But, "Man being in honour, continued not; but became lower than even the beaſts that periſh." He wilfully and openly rebelled againſt God, and caſt off his allegiance to the Majeſty of Heaven. Hereby he inſtantly loſt both the favour of God and the image of God, wherein

wherein he was created. As he was then incapable of obtaining happineſs by the Old, God eſtabliſhed a New Covenant with man: The terms of which were no longer, "Do this and live," but, "Believe and thou ſhalt be ſaved." But ſtill the end of man is one and the ſame; only it ſtands on another foundation. For the plain tenor of it is, "Believe in the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, whom God hath given to be the propitiation for thy ſins, and thou ſhalt be ſaved," firſt from the guilt of ſin, having redemption through his blood: then from the power, which ſhall have no more dominion over thee; and then from the root of it, into the whole image of God. And being reſtored both to the favour and image of God, thou ſhalt know, love, and ſerve him to all eternity. So that ſtill the end of his life, the life of every man born into the world, is to know, love, and ſerve his great Creator.

15. And let it be obſerved, as this is the end, ſo it is the whole and ſole end, for which every man upon the face of the earth, for which every one of *you* were brought into the world, and indued with a living ſoul. Remember! You were born for nothing elſe. You live for nothing elſe. Your life is continued to you upon earth for no other purpoſe than this, that you may know, love, and ſerve God on earth, and enjoy him to all eternity. Conſider! You were not created to pleaſe your Senſes, to gratify your Imagination, to gain Money, or the praiſe of Men; to ſeek happineſs in any created good, in any thing under the ſun: All this is "walking in a vain ſhadow:" It is leading a reſtleſs, miſerable life, in order to a miſerable eternity.

On

On the contrary, you were created for this, and for no other purpoſe, by ſeeking and finding happineſs in God on earth, to ſecure the glory of God in heaven. Therefore, let your heart continually ſay, "This one thing I do." Having one thing in view, remembering why I was born, and why I am continued in life. "I preſs on to the mark." I aim at the one end of my being, God: Even at "God in Chriſt reconciling the world to himſelf." He ſhall be my God for ever and ever, and my Guide even unto death.

Bradforth, May 2, 1788.

SERMON

SERMON CXII.

ON FAITH.

HEBREWS xi. 1.

Now Faith is the Evidence of Things not seen.

1. FOR many ages it has been allowed by sensible men, *Nihil est intellectu quod non fuit prius insensu:* That is, "There is nothing in the understanding which was not first perceived by some of the senses" All the knowledge which we naturally have, is originally derived from our senses. And therefore those who want any sense, cannot have the least knowledge or idea of the objects of that sense: as they that never had sight have not the least knowledge or conception of light or colours. Some indeed have of late years endeavoured to prove, that we have *innate* ideas, not derived from any of the senses, but coeval with the understanding. But this point has been now thoroughly discussed, by men of the most eminent sense and learning. And it is agreed by all

all impartial perſons, that although ſome things are ſo plain and obvious, that we can very hardly avoid knowing them, as ſoon as we come to the uſe of our underſtanding, yet the knowledge even of theſe is not innate, but derived from ſome of our ſenſes.

2. But there is a great difference between our ſenſes, conſidered as the avenues of our knowledge. Some of them have a very narrow ſphere of action: ſome a more extenſive one. By *feeling* we diſcern only thoſe objects, that touch ſome part of our body; and conſequently this ſenſe extends only to a ſmall number of objects. Our ſenſes of *taſte* and *ſmell*, (which ſome count a ſpecies of *feeing*,) extend to fewer ſtill. But on the other hand, our nobler ſenſe of *hearing*, has an exceeding wide ſphere of action; eſpecially in the caſe of loud ſounds, as thunder, the roaring of the ſea, or the diſcharge of cannon: the laſt of which ſounds has been frequently heard at the diſtance of near an hundred miles. Yet the ſpace to which the *hearing* itſelf extends is ſmall, compared to that through which the *ſight* extends. The *ſight* takes in at one view, not only the moſt unbounded proſpects on earth, but alſo the moon, and the other planets, the ſun, yea, the fixt ſtars, though at ſuch an immeaſurable diſtance, that they appear no larger through our fineſt teleſcopes, than they do to the naked eye.

3. But ſtill none of our ſenſes, no not the ſight itſelf, can reach beyond the bounds of this viſible world. They ſupply us with ſuch knowledge of the material world, as anſwers all the purpoſes of life. But as this was the deſign for which they were given, beyond this they cannot go.

They

They furnish us with no information at all concerning the *invisible world.*

4. But the wise and gracious Governor of the worlds, both visible and invisible, has prepared a remedy for this defect. He hath appointed *Faith* to supply the defect of sense; to take us up where sense sets us down, and help us over the great gulph. Its office begins where that of sense ends. Sense is an evidence of things that are seen; of the visible, the material world, and the several parts of it. Faith, on the other hand, is the "evidence of things not seen," of the *invisible world:* of all those invisible things, which are revealed in the oracles of God. But indeed they reveal nothing, they are a mere *dead letter*, if they are "not mixt with faith in those that hear them."

5. In particular. Faith is an evidence to me, of the existence of that unseen thing, my own soul. Without this I should be in utter uncertainty concerning it. I should be constrained to ask that melancholy question,

> "Hear'st thou submissive, but a lowly birth,
> Some separate particles of finer earth?"

But by Faith I know it is an immortal spirit, made in the image of God, in his natural and moral image, "an incorruptible picture of the God of glory." By the same evidence I know that I am now fallen short of the glorious image of God; yea, that I, as well as all mankind, am "dead in trespasses and sins." So utterly dead, that "in me dwelleth no good thing;" that I am inclined to all evil, and totally unable to quicken my own soul.

6. By Faith I know, that besides the souls of men,

men, there are other orders of ſpirits: Yea, I believe that

> "Millions of creatures walk the earth
> Unſeen, whether we wake, or ſleep."

Theſe I term *Angels*, and I believe part of them are holy and happy, and the other part wicked and miſerable. I believe the former of theſe, the good angels, are continually ſent of God, "to miniſter to the heirs of ſalvation;" who will be "equal to angels" by and by, although they are now a little inferior to them. I believe the latter, the evil angels, called in ſcripture, *devils*, united under one head, (termed in ſcripture, *ſatan*, emphatically the *enemy*, the *adverſary* both of God and man,) either range the upper regions, whence they are called "princes of the power of the air;" or like him, "walk about the earth as roaring lions, ſeeking whom they may devour."

7. But I know by Faith, that above all theſe, is the LORD, JEHOVAH, He that is, that was, and that is to come, that is God from everlaſting and world without end: He that filleth heaven and earth: He that is infinite in power, in wiſdom, in juſtice, in mercy, and holineſs: He that created all things, viſible and inviſible, by the breath of his mouth, and ſtill upholds them all, preſerves them in being, "by the word of his power;" and that governs all things, that are in heaven above, in earth beneath, and under the earth. By Faith I know, "there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Spirit, and that theſe three are one." That the Word, God the Son, "was made fleſh," lived and died for our ſalvation, roſe again, aſcended into heaven, and now ſitteth on the right

hand of the Father. By Faith I know that the Holy Spirit is the giver of all ſpiritual life; of righteouſneſs, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt; of holineſs and happineſs, by the reſtoration of that image of God, wherein we were created. Of all theſe things Faith is the evidence, the ſole evidence to the children of men.

8. And as the information which we receive from our ſenſes, does not extend to the *inviſible world*, ſo neither does it extend to (what is nearly related thereto,) the *eternal world*. In ſpite of all the inſtruction which either the ſight or any of the ſenſes can afford,

"The vaſt, th' unbounded proſpect lies before us,
But clouds, alas! and darkneſs reſt upon it."

Senſe does not let in one ray of light to diſcover

"The ſecrets of the illimitable deep."

This, the *eternal world*, commences at death, the death of every individual perſon. The moment the breath of man goeth forth, he is an inhabitant of eternity. Juſt then time vaniſhes away, "like as a dream, when one awaketh." And here again, Faith ſupplies the place of ſenſe, and gives us a view of things to come; at once it draws aſide the veil which hangs between mortal and immortal beings. Faith diſcovers to us the ſouls of the righteous, immediately received by the holy angels, and carried by theſe miniſtering ſpirits, into Abraham's boſom; into the delights of paradiſe, the garden of God, where the light of his countenance perpetually ſhines; where he converſes not only with his former relations, friends, and fellow-ſoldiers, but with the ſaints of

of all nations, and all ages; with the glorious dead of ancient days; with the noble army of Martyrs, the Apoſtles, the Prophets, the Patriarchs, Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob. Yea, above all this, he ſhall be with Chriſt, in a manner that he could not be, while he remained in the body.

9. It diſcovers likewiſe the ſouls of unholy men; ſeized the moment they depart from the quivering lips, by thoſe miniſters of vengeance, the evil angels, and dragged away to their own place. It is true, this is not the nethermoſt hell; they are not to be tormented there "before the time," before the end of the world, when every one will receive his juſt recompence of reward. Till then they will probably be employed by their bad maſter, in advancing his infernal kingdom, and in doing all the miſchief that lies in their power, to the poor, feeble children of men. But ſtill, wherever they ſeek reſt, they will find none. They carry with them their own hell, in the worm that never dieth; in a conſciouſneſs of guilt, and of the wrath of God, which continually drinks up their ſpirits; in diabolical, infernal tempers, which are eſſential miſery; and in what they cannot ſhake off, no, not for an hour, any more than they can ſhake off their own being, that "fearful looking for of fiery indignation, which will devour God's adverſaries."

10. Moreover, Faith opens another ſcene in the eternal world, namely, the coming of our Lord in the clouds of heaven, "to judge both the quick and the dead." It enables us to ſee the "great white throne coming down from heaven, and Him that ſitteth thereon, from whoſe face the heavens and the earth flee away, and there

is found no place for them. We ſee the dead, ſmall and great, ſtand before God. We ſee the books opened—and the dead judged, according to the things that are written in the books. We ſee the earth and the ſea giving up their dead, and hell, (that is, the inviſible world,) giving up the dead that were therein, and every one judged according to his works."

11. By Faith we are alſo ſhewn the immediate conſequences of the General Judgment. We ſee the execution of that happy ſentence, pronounced upon thoſe on the right hand, "Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you, from the foundation of the world!" After which the holy angels tune their harps and ſing, "Lift up your heads, O ye gates, and be ye lifted up, ye everlaſting doors, that the heirs of glory may come in!" And then ſhall they drink of the rivers of pleaſure that are at God's right hand for evermore. We ſee likewiſe the execution of that dreadful ſentence, pronounced upon thoſe on the left hand, "Depart, ye curſed, into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." And then ſhall the miniſters of divine vengeance plunge them into "the lake of fire burning with brimſtone, where they have no reſt day or night, but the ſmoke of their torment aſcendeth up for ever and ever."

12. But beſide the *inviſible* and the *eternal* world, which are not ſeen, which are diſcoverable only by Faith, there is a whole ſyſtem of things, which are not ſeen, which cannot be diſcerned by any of our outward ſenſes, I mean, the *ſpiritual world*, underſtanding thereby the kingdom of God in the ſoul of man. "Eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard this; neither can it enter into the heart

heart of man to conceive the things of" this inferior kingdom, unleſs God revealed them by his Spirit. The Holy Spirit prepares us for his inward kingdom, by removing the veil from our heart, and enabling us to know ourſelves as we are known of him; by "convincing us of ſin," of our evil nature, our evil tempers, and our evil words and actions; all of which cannot but partake of the corruption of the heart from which they ſpring. He then convinces us of the deſert of our ſins, ſo that our mouth is ſtopped, and we are conſtrained to plead guilty before God. At the ſame time, "we receive the ſpirit of bondage unto fear;" fear of the wrath of God, fear of the puniſhment which we have deſerved, and above all, fear of death, leſt it ſhould conſign us over to eternal death. Souls that are thus convinced, feel that they are ſo faſt in priſon that they cannot get forth. They feel themſelves at once altogether ſinful, altogether guilty, and altogether helpleſs. But all this conviction implies a ſpecies of Faith, being "an evidence of things not ſeen;" nor indeed poſſible to be ſeen or known, till God reveals them unto us.

13. But ſtill let it be carefully obſerved, (for it is a point of no ſmall importance,) that this Faith is only the Faith of a ſervant, and not the Faith of a ſon. Becauſe this is a point which many do not clearly underſtand, I will endeavour to make it a little plainer. The Faith of a ſervant implies a divine evidence of the *inviſible* and *eternal* world: yea, and an evidence of the *ſpiritual* world, ſo far as it can exiſt without living experience. Whoever has attained this, the Faith of a ſervant, "feareth God, and eſcheweth evil:" Or, as it is expreſſed by St. Peter, "feareth God

and worketh righteouſneſs." In conſequence of which, he *is* in a degree, (as the Apoſtle obſerves, "accepted with him." Elſewhere he is deſcribed in thoſe words, "He that feareth God, and keepeth his commandments." Even one who has gone thus far in religion, who obeys God out of fear, is not in any wiſe to be deſpiſed, ſeeing "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wiſdom." Nevertheleſs he ſhould be exhorted, not to ſtop there; not to reſt till he attains the adoption of ſons; till he obeys him out of love, which is the privilege of all the *children* of God.

14 Exhort him to preſs on by all poſſible means, till he paſſes "from faith to faith;" from the faith of a *ſervant* to the faith of a *ſon*: from the ſpirit of bondage unto fear, to the ſpirit of childlike love: He will then have "Chriſt revealed in his heart," enabling him to teſtify, "The life that I now live in the fleſh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved *me*, and gave himſelf for *me*:" the proper voice of a child of God. He will then be "born of God," inwardly changed by the mighty power of God, from an earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh mind, to the mind which was in Chriſt Jeſus. He will experience what St. Paul means, by thoſe remarkable words to the Galatians, "Ye are the ſons of God by faith; and becauſe ye are ſons, God hath ſent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." "He that believeth," as a ſon, (as St. John obſerves) "hath the witneſs in himſelf. The Spirit itſelf witneſſes with his ſpirit, that he is a child of God. The love of God is ſhed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghoſt which is given unto him."

15. But

15. But many doubts and fears may ſtill remain, even in a child of God, while he is weak in faith, while he is in the number of thoſe whom St. Paul terms "babes in Chriſt." But when his faith is ſtrengthened, when he receives Faith's abiding impreſſion, realizing things to come; when he has received the abiding witneſs of the Spirit, doubts and fears vaniſh away. He then enjoys the *plerophory*, or "full aſſurance of faith," excluding all doubt, and all "fear that hath torment." To thoſe that he ſtiles *young* men, St. John ſays, "I have written unto you, young men, becauſe ye are ſtrong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one." Theſe, the Apoſtle obſerves in the other verſe, had "the word of God abiding in them." It may not improbably mean, The pardoning word, the word which ſpake all their ſins forgiven. In conſequence of which, they have the conſciouſneſs of the Divine favour, without any intermiſſion.

16. To theſe more eſpecially we may apply the exhortation of the Apoſtle Paul, "Leaving the firſt principles of the doctrine of Chriſt, (namely, repentance and faith,) let us go on unto perfection." But in what ſenſe are we to *leave thoſe principles?* Not abſolutely; for we are to retain both one and the other, the knowledge of ourſelves, and the knowledge of God, unto our lives' end. But only comparatively; not fixing, as we did at firſt, our whole attention upon them, thinking and talking perpetually of nothing elſe, but either repentance or faith. But what is the *Perfection* here ſpoken of? It is not only a deliverance from doubts and fears, but from ſin, from all inward, as well as outward ſin: from evil deſires,

deſires, and evil tempers, as well as from evil words and works. Yea, and it is not only a negative bleſſing, a deliverance from all evil diſpoſitions, implied in that expreſſion, "I will circumciſe thy heart;" but a poſitive one likewiſe, even the planting all good diſpoſitions in their place, clearly implied in that other expreſſion, "To love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your ſoul."

17. Theſe are they to whom the Apoſtle John gives the venerable title of *Fathers*, "who have known him that is from the beginning," the eternal three one God. One of theſe expreſſes himſelf thus, "I bear about with me, an experimental verity and a plenitude of the preſence of the ever-bleſſed Trinity." And thoſe who are fathers in Chriſt, generally (though I believe) not always, enjoy the plerophory or "full aſſurance of hope:" Having no more doubt of reigning with him in glory, than if they already ſaw him coming in the clouds of heaven. But this does not prevent their continually increaſing in the knowledge and love of God. While they "rejoice evermore, pray without ceaſing, and in every thing give thanks," they pray in particular, that they may never ceaſe to watch, to deny themſelves, to take up their croſs daily, to fight the good fight of faith, and againſt the world, the devil, and their own manifold infirmities; till they are "able to comprehend with all ſaints, what is the length, and breadth, and height and depth, and to know that love of Chriſt, which paſſeth knowledge; yea, to be filled with all the fulneſs of God."

Yarm, June 11, 1788.

SERMON

SERMON CXIII.

ON FAITH.

HEBREWS xi. 1.

Now Faith is the Evidence of things not ſeen:

1. MANY times have I thought, many times have I ſpoke, many times have I wrote upon theſe words: and yet there appears to be a depth in them, which I am in no wiſe able to fathom. Faith is in one ſenſe of the word, a divine conviction of God and of the things of God: in another (nearly related to, yet not altogether the ſame) it is a divine conviction of the inviſible and eternal World. In this ſenſe I would now conſider,—

2. I am now an immortal ſpirit, ſtrangely connected with a little portion of earth: but this is only for a while. In a ſhort time I am to quit this tenement of clay, and to remove into another ſtate,

" Which

"Which the living know not,
And the dead cannot,—or they may not tell!"

What kind of exiſtence ſhall I then enter upon? When my ſpirit has launched out of the body; how ſhall I feel myſelf? Perceive my own being? How ſhall I diſcern the things that are round about me, either material or ſpiritual objects? When my eyes no longer tranſmit the rays of light, how will the naked ſpirit *ſee?* When the organs of hearing are mouldered into duſt, in what manner ſhall I *hear?* When the brain is of no further uſe, what means of *thinking* ſhall I have? When my whole body is reſolved into ſenſeleſs earth, what means ſhall I have of gaining *knowledge?*

3. How ſtrange, how incomprehenſible are the means whereby I ſhall then take knowledge even of the material world? Will things appear then as they do now? Of the ſame ſize, ſhape, and colour? Or will they be altered in any, or all theſe reſpects? How will the Sun, Moon, and Stars appear? The ſublunary Heavens? The Planetary Heavens? The region of the fixt Stars? How the fields of Æther, which we may conceive to be millions of miles beyond them? Of all this we know nothing yet: and indeed we need to know nothing.

4. What then can we know of thoſe innumerable objects, which properly belong to the inviſible world? Which mortal eye hath not ſeen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into our heart to conceive? What a ſcene will then be opened, when the regions of *Hades* are diſplayed without a covering! Our *Engliſh* Tranſlators ſeem to have been much at a loſs, for a word to render

render this. Indeed two hundred years ago it was tolerably expreſt by the word *Hell*, which then ſignified much the ſame with the word *Hades*, namely, the inviſible world. Accordingly, by Chriſt deſcending into Hell, they meant his body remained in the grave, his ſoul remained in *Hades*, which is the receptacle of ſeparate ſpirits, from Death to the Reſurrection. Here we cannot doubt but the ſpirits of the righteous are inexpreſſibly happy. They are, as St. *Paul* expreſſes it, *with the Lord*, favoured with ſo intimate a communion with him, as *is far better than* whatever the chief of the Apoſtles experienced while in this world. On the other hand, we learn from our Lord's own account of *Dives* and *Lazarus*, that the rich man, from the moment he left the world, entered into a ſtate of torment. And *there is a great gulph fixt* in *Hades*, between the place of the holy, and that of unholy ſpirits, which it is impoſſible for either the one or the other to paſs over. Indeed a gentleman of great learning, the honourable Mr. *Campbell*, in his account of the Middle State, publiſhed not many years ago, ſeems to ſuppoſe that wicked ſouls may amend in *Hades*, and then remove to a happier manſion. He has great hopes, that *the rich man* mentioned by our Lord in particular, might be purified by that penal fire, till in proceſs of time, he might be qualified for a better abode. But who can reconcile this with *Abraham's* aſſertion, that none can paſs over the *great gulph?*

5. I cannot therefore but think that all thoſe who are with *the rich man* in the unhappy diviſion of *Hades*, will remain there, howling and blaſpheming, curſing and looking upwards, till they

they are caſt into "the everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." And on the other hand, can we reaſonably doubt, but that thoſe who are now in Paradiſe, in *Abraham's* boſom, all thoſe holy ſouls, who have been diſcharged from the body, from the beginning of the world unto this day, will be continually ripening for heaven, will be perpetually holier and happier, till they are received into the "kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world."

6. But who can inform us, in what part of the Univerſe *Hades* is ſituated? This abode of both happy and unhappy ſpirits, till they are reunited to their bodies? It has not pleaſed God, to reveal any thing concerning it, in the Holy Scripture: and conſequently, it is not poſſible for us, to form any judgment or even conjecture about it. Neither are we informed how either one or the other are employed, during the time of their abode there. Yet may we, not improbably, ſuppoſe, that the Governor of the world may ſometimes permit wicked ſouls "To do his gloomy errands in the deep?" Or perhaps, in conjunction with evil angels, to inflict vengeance on wicked men. Or will many of them be ſhut up in chains of darkneſs, unto the judgment of the great day? In the mean time, may we not probably ſuppoſe, that the ſpirits of the juſt, tho' generally lodged in Paradiſe, yet may ſometimes, in conjunction with the holy angels, miniſter to the heirs of ſalvation? May they not

> "Sometimes on errands of love,
> Reviſit their brethren below?"

It

It is a pleasing thought, that some of these human Spirits, attending us with, or in the room of angels, are of the number of those, that were dear to us, while they were in the body. So that there is no absurdity in the question,

> "Have ye your own flesh forgot,
> By a common ransom bought?
> Can Death's interposing tide,
> Spirits one in Christ divide?"

But be this as it may, it is certain human spirits swiftly increase in knowledge, in holiness, and in happiness. Conversing with all the wise and holy souls that lived in all ages and nations from the beginning of the world. With angels and archangels, to whom the children of men are no more than infants: and above all, with the eternal Son of God, in whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge. And let it be especially considered, whatever they learn, they will retain for ever. For they forget nothing. To forget is only incident to spirits that are clothed with flesh and blood.

7. But how will this material Universe appear, to a disembodied spirit? Who can tell whether any of these objects that surround us will appear the same as they do now: and if we know so little of these, what can we now know, concerning objects of a quite different nature? Concerning the spiritual world? It seems, it will not be possible for us to discern them at all, till we are furnished with senses of a different nature, which are not yet opened in our souls. These may enable us, both to penetrate the inmost substance of things, whereof we now discern only the surface, and to discern innumerable things,

of the very exiſtence whereof we have not now the leaſt perception. What aſtoniſhing ſcenes will then diſcover themſelves to our newly opening ſenſes! Probably fields of Ether, not only ten fold, but ten thouſand fold, "The length of this Terene." And with what variety of furniture, animate and inanimate! How many orders of beings, not diſcovered by organs of fleſh and blood. Perhaps,—Thrones, dominions, principedoms, virtues, powers? Whether of thoſe that retain their firſt habitations and primeval ſtrength: or of thoſe that rebelling againſt their Creator, have been caſt out of heaven? And ſhall we not then, as far as angels ken, ſurvey the bounds of creation, and ſee every place where the Almighty,—

"Stop'd his rapid wheels, and ſaid,—
"This be thy juſt circumference, O world."

Yea, ſhall we not be able to move, quick as thought, through the wide realms of uncreated night? Above all, the moment we ſtep into eternity, ſhall we not feel ourſelves ſwallowed up of Him, who is in this and every place, who filleth heaven and earth? It is only the veil of fleſh and blood which now hinders us from perceiving, that the great Creator cannot but fill the whole immenſity of ſpace? He is every moment above us, beneath us, and on every ſide. Indeed, in this dark abode, this land of ſhadows, this region of ſin and death, the thick cloud, which is interpoſed between, conceals him from our ſight. But the veil will diſappear, and he will appear in uncloudded majeſty, God over all, bleſſed for ever!

8. How

8. How variously are the children of men employed in this world? In treading o'er—"The paths they trod six thousand years before?"—But who knows how we shall be employed, after we enter that invisible world? A little of it we may conceive, and that without any doubt, provided we keep to what God himself has revealed in his word, and what he works in the hearts of his children. Let us consider first, what may be the employment of unholy spirits, from death to the resurrection. We cannot doubt but the moment they leave the body, they find themselves surrounded by spirits of their own kind, probably human as well as diabolical. What power God may permit these to exercise over them, we do not distinctly know. But it is not improbable, he may suffer satan to employ them, as he does his own angels, in inflicting death, or evils of various kinds on the men that know not God: for this end they may raise storms by sea or by land, they may shoot meteors through the air. They may occasion earthquakes, and in numberless ways afflict those whom they are not suffered to destroy. Where they are not permitted to take away life, they may inflict various diseases: and many of these which we judge to be natural, are undoubtedly diabolical. I believe this is frequently the case with Lunatics. It is observable, that many of those mentioned in Scripture, who are called Lunatics by one of the Evangelists, are termed Daemoniacs by another. One of the most eminent Physicians I ever knew, particularly in cases of Infanity, the late Dr. *Deacon*, was clearly of opinion, that this was the case with many, if not with most Lunatics. And it is no valid objection to this, that these diseases are so often

cured by natural means. For a wound inflicted by an evil ſpirit, might be cured as any other; unleſs that ſpirit was permitted to repeat the blow.

9. May not ſome of theſe evil ſpirits be likewiſe employed in conjunction with evil angels, in tempting wicked men to ſin, and in procuring occaſion for them? Yea, and in tempting good men to ſin, even after they had eſcaped the corruption that is in the world. Herein doubtleſs they put forth all their ſtrength, and greatly glory, if they conquer. A paſſage in an ancient Author, may greatly illuſtrate this: (although I apprehend, he did not intend, that we ſhould take it literally.) "Satan ſummoned his powers, and examined, what miſchief each of them had done? One ſaid, I have ſet a houſe on fire, and deſtroyed all its inhabitants? Another ſaid, "I have raiſed a ſtorm at ſea, and ſunk a ſhip, and all on board periſhed in the waters." Satan anſwered, "Perhaps thoſe that were burnt or drowned were ſaved?" A third ſaid, "I have been forty years tempting a holy man to commit adultery. And I have left him aſleep in his ſin." Hearing this, Satan roſe to do him honour, and all Hell reſounded with his praiſe." Hear this, all ye that imagine you cannot fall from grace!

10. Ought not we then to be perpetually on our guard, againſt theſe ſubtle enemies? Tho' we ſee them not,

"A conſtant watch they keep:
They eye us night and day;
And never ſlumber, never ſleep,
Leſt they ſhould loſe their prey."

Herein

Herein they join with "the rulers of the darkneſs (the intellectual darkneſs) of this world;" the ignorance, wickedneſs and miſery diffuſed through it, to hinder all good, and promote all evil! To this end they are continually "working with energy, in the children of diſobedience. Yea, ſometimes they work by them thoſe *lying wonders*, that might almoſt deceive even the children of God.

11. But mean time, how may we conceive the inhabitants of the other part of *Hades*, the ſouls of the righteous to be employed? It has been poſitively affirmed by ſome philoſophical men, that ſpirits have no place! But they do not obſerve, that if it were ſo, they muſt be omnipreſent. An attribute which cannot be allowed to any but the Almighty Spirit. The abode of theſe bleſſed ſpirits the ancient Jews were uſed to term Paradiſe: the ſame name which our Lord gave it, telling the penitent thief, "This day ſhalt thou be with me in Paradiſe." Yet in what part of the Univerſe this is ſituated, who can tell, or even conjecture, ſince it has not pleaſed God to reveal any thing concerning it. But we have no reaſon to think they are confined to this place: or indeed to any other. May we not rather ſay, that *ſervants of his*, as well as the holy angels, they *do his pleaſure*, whether among the inhabitants of earth, or in any other part of his dominions? And as we eaſily believe, that they are ſwifter than the light, even as ſwift as thought, they are well able to traverſe the whole Univerſe in the twinkling of an eye, either to execute the divine commands, or to contemplate the works of God. What a field is here opened before them! And how inexpreſſibly may they increaſe

in knowledge, while they survey his works of Creation or Providence, or his manifold wisdom in the Church! What depth of wisdom, of power, and of goodness do they discover in his methods of bringing many sons to glory! Especially while they conversed on any of these subjects, with the illustrious dead of ancient days! With *Adam*, first of men, with *Noah*, who saw both the primeval and the ruined world. With *Abraham*, the friend of God, with *Moses*, who was favoured to speak with God, as it were *face to face;* with *Job*, perfected by sufferings, with *Samuel*, *David*, *Solomon*, *Isaiah*, *Daniel*, and all the Prophets. With the Apostles, the noble army of Martyrs; and all the Saints who have lived and died to the present day; with our elder brethren, the holy angels, cherubim, seraphim, and all the companies of heaven! Above all the name of creature owns, with Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant. Mean time how will they advance in holiness, in the whole image of God wherein they were created. In the love of God and man, gratitude to their Creator, and benevolence to all their fellow creatures. Yet it does not follow (what some earnestly maintain) that this general benevolence, will at all interfere with that peculiar affection, which God himself implants for our relations, friends and benefactors. O no! Had you stood by his bed side, when that dying saint was crying out, "I have a father and and a mother gone to heaven, (to Paradise, the receptacle of happy spirits.) I have ten brothers and sisters gone to heaven: and now I am going to them, that am the eleventh! Blessed be God that I was born!" Would you have replied, "What, if you are going to them? They will be

be no more to *you* than any other perſons: for you will not know them." Not know them! Nay, does not all that is in you recoil at that thought? Indeed Sceptics may aſk, How do diſembodied ſpirits know each other? I anſwer plainly, I cannot tell. But I am certain that they do. This is as plainly proved from one paſſage of Scripture, as it could be from a thouſand. Did not *Abraham*, and *Lazarus* know each other in *Hades*, even afar off? Even though they were fixt on different ſides of the *great gulph?* Can we doubt then whether the ſouls that are together in Paradiſe ſhall know one another? The Scripture therefore clearly decides this queſtion. And ſo does the very reaſon of the thing. For we know, every holy temper which we carry with us into Paradiſe, will remain in us for ever. But ſuch is gratitude to our benefactors. This therefore will remain for ever. And this implies, that the knowledge of our benefactors will remain, without which it cannot exiſt.

12. And how much will that add to the happineſs of thoſe ſpirits, who are already diſcharged from the body, that they are permitted to miniſter to thoſe whom they have left behind? An indiſputable proof of this we have, in the twenty-ſecond chapter of the *Revelation*. When the apoſtle fell down to worſhip the glorious ſpirit which he ſeems to have miſtaken for Chriſt, he told him plainly, "I am of thy fellow-ſervants, the Prophets;" not God, not an angel, but a human ſpirit. And in how many ways may they miniſter to the heirs of ſalvation. Sometimes by counteracting wicked ſpirits whom we cannot reſiſt, becauſe we cannot ſee them: ſometimes by preventing our being hurt by men, or beaſts, or inanimate

inanimate creatures: how often may it please God to answer the prayer of good Bishop *Ken*,

" O may thine angels while I sleep,
Around my bed their vigils keep!
Their love angelical instil;
Stop all the consequence of ill:

" May they celestial joys rehearse,
And thought to thought with me converse;
Or in my stead the whole night long
Sing to my God a grateful song."

And may not the Father of Spirits allot this office jointly to angels, and human spirits waiting to be made perfect?

13. It may indeed be objected, that God has no need of any subordinate agents of either angelical or human spirits, to guard his children, in their waking or sleeping hours; seeing He that keepeth Israel doth neither slumber nor sleep. And certainly, He is able to preserve them by his own immediate power, yea, and he is able, by his own immediate power only, without any instruments at all, to supply the wants of all his creatures, both in heaven and earth. But it is, and ever was his pleasure, not to work by his own immediate power only, but chiefly by subordinate means, from the beginning of the world. And how wonderfully is his wisdom displayed, in adjusting all these to each other! So that we may well cry out, " O Lord, how manifold are thy works! In wisdom hast thou made them all!"

14. This we know, concerning the whole frame and arrangement of the visible world. But how exceeding little do we now know, concerning the invisible? And we should have known

still

ſtill leſs of it, had it not pleaſed the Author of both worlds, to give us more than natural light, to give us "his word, to be a lantern to our feet, and a light in all our paths." And holy men of old, being aſſiſted by his Spirit, have diſcovered many particulars, of which otherwiſe we ſhould have had no conception.

15. And without Revelation, how little certainty of inviſible things did the wiſeſt of men obtain? The ſmall glimmerings of light which they had, were merely conjectural. At beſt they were only a faint, dim twilight, delivered from uncertain tradition; and ſo obſcured by heathen fables, that it was but one degree better than utter darkneſs.

16. How uncertain the beſt of theſe conjectures was, may eaſily be gathered from their own accounts. The moſt finiſhed of all theſe accounts, is that of the great *Roman* Poet. Where obſerve how warily he begins, with that apologetic Preface?—Sit mihi fas audita loqui?—"May I be allowed to tell what I have heard?"—And in the concluſion, leſt any one ſhould imagine, he believed any of theſe accounts, he ſends the relator of them out of *Hades*, by the *ivory gate*, thro' which he had juſt informed us, that only dreams and ſhadows paſs! A very plain intimation, that all which has gone before, is to be looked upon as a dream!

17. How little regard they had for all theſe conjectures, with regard to the inviſible world, clearly appears from the words of his brother Poet, who affirms without any ſcruple,

Eſſe aliquos manes & ſubterranea regna
Nec fieri credunt.

"That

"That there are Ghofts or Realms below, not even a man of them now believes."

So little could even the moft improved reafon difcover concerning the inviſible and eternal world. The greater cauſe have we, to praiſe the Father of lights, who hath opened the eyes of our underſtanding, to diſcern thoſe things which could not be ſeen by eyes of fleſh and blood: that He who of old time ſhined out of darkneſs, hath ſhined in our hearts, and enlightened us with the light of the glory of God, in the face of Jeſus Chriſt; the author and finiſher of our faith; by whom he made the worlds; by whom he now ſuſtains whatever he hath made: for,

"'Till nature ſhall her Judge ſurvey,
The King Meſſiah reigns."

Theſe things we have believed upon the teſtimony of God: the Creator of all things viſible and inviſible: by this teſtimony we already know the things that now exiſt, though not yet ſeen, as as well as thoſe that will exiſt in their ſeaſon, until this viſible world ſhall paſs away, and the Son of Man ſhall come in his glory.

18. Upon the whole, what thanks ought we to render to God, who has vouchſafed this *evidence of things unſeen*, to the poor inhabitants of earth, who otherwiſe muſt have remained in utter darkneſs concerning them? How invaluable a gift, is even this imperfect light, to the benighted ſons of men? What a relief is it to the defects of our ſenſes, and conſequently of our underſtanding? Which can give us no information of any thing, but what is firſt preſented by the ſenſes. But hereby a new ſet of ſenſes

ſenſes (ſo to ſpeak) is opened in our ſouls: and by this means,

" The things unknown to feeble ſenſe,
Unſeen by reaſon's glimmering ray,
With ſtrong, commanding evidence,
Their heav'nly origin diſplay.

" Faith lends its realizing light:
The clouds diſperſe, the ſhadows fly:
Th' Inviſible appears in ſight,
And God is ſeen by mortal eye!"

London, Jan. 17, 1791.

SERMON

SERMON CXIV.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WALKING BY SIGHT, AND WALKING BY FAITH.

2 CORINTHIANS v. 7.

We walk by Faith, not by Sight.

1. HOW short is the description of real Christians! And yet how exceeding full! It comprehends, it sums up the whole experience of those that are truly such, from the time they are born of God, till they remove into Abraham's bosom. For, who are the *we* that are here spoken of? All that are true Christian believers. I say, *Christian* not *Jewish believers*. All that are not only *servants*, but *children* of God. All that have "the Spirit of adoption, crying in their hearts, Abba, Father." All that have "the Spirit of God witnessing with their spirits, that they are the sons of God."

2. All these, and these alone can say, "We walk by faith, and not by sight." But before we

we can poſſibly "walk by faith," we muſt *live* by faith, and not by ſight. And to all real Chriſtians our Lord ſaith, "Becauſe I live, ye live alſo: Ye live a life," which the world, whether learned or unlearned, "know not of." "You that," like the world, "were dead in treſpaſſes and ſins, hath he quickened, and made alive;" given you new ſenſes, ſpiritual ſenſes: "Senſes exerciſed to diſcern *ſpiritual* good and evil."

3. In order throughly to underſtand this important truth, it may be proper to conſider the whole matter. All the children of men that are not born of God, "walk by ſight," having no higher principle. By *ſight*, that is by *ſenſe*; a part being put for the whole; the ſight for all the ſenſes: The rather, becauſe it is more noble and more extenſive than any, or all the reſt. There are but few objects which we can diſcern by the three inferior ſenſes of taſte, ſmell, and feeling: And none of theſe can take any cognizance of its object, unleſs it be brought into a direct contact with it. Hearing, it is true, has a large ſphere of action, and gives us ſome knowledge of things that are diſtant. But how ſmall is that diſtance, ſuppoſe it were fifty or a hundred miles, compared to that between the earth and the ſun? And what is even this, in compariſon of the diſtance of the ſun and moon and the fixt ſtars? Yet the ſight continually takes knowledge of objects even at this amazing diſtance.

4. By ſight, we take knowledge of the viſible world, from the ſurface of the earth, to the region of the fixt ſtars. But what is the world viſible to us, but "a ſpeck of creation," com-

 pared

pared to the whole univerſe? To the inviſible world? That part of the creation which we cannot ſee at all, by reaſon of its diſtance? In the place of which, through the imperfection of our ſenſes, we are preſented with an univerſal blank.

5. But beſide theſe innumerable objects, which we cannot ſee by reaſon of their diſtance, have we not ſufficient ground to believe, that there are innumerable others of too delicate a nature to be diſcerned by any of our ſenſes? Do not all men of unprejudiced reaſon allow, (the ſmall number of Materialiſts, or Atheiſts, the ſame thing, I cannot term *men of reaſon*,) that there is an inviſible world, naturally ſuch, as well as a viſible one? But which of our ſenſes is fine enough to take the leaſt knowledge of this? We can no more perceive any part of this, by our ſight, than by our feeling. Should we allow with the ancient Poet, that

> "Millions of ſpiritual creatures walk the earth,
> Unſeen, both when we wake, and when we ſleep."

Should we allow, that the great Spirit, the Father of all, filleth both heaven and earth: Yet is the fineſt of our ſenſes utterly incapable of perceiving either Him or them.

6. All our external ſenſes are evidently adapted to this external, viſible world. They are deſigned to ſerve us only while we ſojourn here, while we dwell in theſe houſes of clay. They have nothing to do with the inviſible world: They are not adapted to it. And they can take no more cognizance of the eternal, than of the

the invisible world. Although we are as fully assured of the existence of this, as of any thing in the present world. We cannot think death puts a period to our being. The body indeed returns to dust: But the soul, being of a nobler nature, is not affected thereby. There is therefore an eternal world, of what kind soever it be. But how shall we attain the knowledge of this? What will teach us to draw aside the veil—"That hangs 'twixt mortal and immortal being?" We all know,—"The vast, the unbounded prospect lies before us:" But are we constrained to add,—"Yet clouds, alas! and darkness rest upon it."

7. The most excellent of our senses, it is undeniably plain, can give us no assistance herein. And what can our boasted reason do? It is now universally allowed, *Nihil est in intellectu quod non fuit prius in sensu:* Nothing is in the understanding, which was not first perceived by some of the senses. Consequently the understanding having here nothing to work upon, can afford us no help at all. So that in spite of all the information we can gain, either from sense or reason, both the invisible and eternal world are unknown to all that "walk by sight."

8. But is there no help? Must they remain in total darkness, concerning the invisible and the eternal world? We cannot affirm this: Even the Heathens did not all remain in total darkness concerning them. Some few rays of light have in all ages and nations gleamed through the shade. Some light they derived from various fountains, touching the invisible world. "The heavens declared the glory of God," though not to their outward sight: "The

firmament ſhewed" to the eyes of their underſtanding the exiſtence of their Maker. From the creation they inferred, the being of a Creator, powerful and wiſe, juſt and merciful. And hence they concluded, there muſt be an eternal world, a future ſtate to commence after the preſent, wherein the juſtice of God in puniſhing wicked men, and his mercy in rewarding the righteous, will be openly and undeniably diſplayed, in the ſight of all intelligent creatures.

9. We may likewiſe reaſonably ſuppoſe, that ſome traces of knowledge, both with regard to the inviſible and the eternal world, were delivered down from Noah and his children, both to their immediate and remote deſcendants. And however theſe were obſcured or diſguiſed by the addition of numberleſs fables, yet ſomething of truth was ſtill mingled with them, and theſe ſtreaks of light prevented utter darkneſs. Add to this, that God never, in any age or nation, "left himſelf quite without a witneſs" in the hearts of men; but while he "gave them rain and fruitful ſeaſons," imparted ſome imperfect knowledge of the Giver. "He is the true light that ſtill, in ſome degree, enlighteneth every man that cometh into the world."

10. But all theſe lights put together availed no farther, than to produce a faint twilight. It gave them, even the moſt enlightened of them, no ἔλεγχος, demonſtration, no demonſtrative conviction, either of the inviſible, or of the eternal world. Our philoſophical Poet juſtly terms Socrates, "The wiſeſt of all moral men;" that is, of all that were not favoured with divine revelation.

revelation. Yet what evidence had he of another world, when he addreſſed thoſe that had condemned him to death,—

"And now, O ye Judges, ye are going to live, and I am going to die. Which of theſe is beſt, God knows; but I ſuppoſe, no man does." Alas! what a confeſſion is this? Is this all the evidence that poor, dying Socrates had, either of an inviſible, or eternal world! And yet even this is preferable to the light of the great and good Emperor, Adrian. Remember, ye modern heathens, and copy after this pathetic addreſs to his parting ſoul. (For fear I ſhould puzzle you with Latin, I give it you in Prior's fine tranſlation.)

"Poor, little, pretty, fluttering thing,
Muſt we no longer live together?
And doſt thou prune thy trembling wing,
To take thy flight, thou know'ſt not whither.

——Thy pleaſing vein, thy humorous folly,
Lies all neglected, all forgot!
And penſive, wavering, melancholy,
Thou hop'ſt and fear'ſt thou know'ſt not what."

11. "Thou knoweſt not what!" True, there was no knowledge of what was to be hoped or feared after death, till "the Sun of Righteouſneſs" aroſe, to diſpel all their vain conjectures; and "brought life and immortality," that is, immortal life, "to light through the gospel." Then, (and not till then, unleſs in ſome rare

inſtances,) God revealed, unveiled the inviſible world. He then revealed himſelf to the children of men. "The Father revealed the Son" in their hearts: "And the Son revealed the Father. He that of old time commanded light to ſhine in their hearts, and enlightened them with the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jeſus Chriſt."

12. It is where ſenſe can be of no farther uſe, that faith comes in to our help: It is the grand deſideratum: It does what none of the ſenſes can; no, not with all the helps that art hath invented. All our inſtruments, however improved by the ſkill and labour of ſo many ſucceeding ages, do not enable us to make the leaſt diſcovery of theſe unknown regions. They barely ſerve the occaſions for which they were formed, in the preſent, viſible world

13. How different is the caſe, how vaſt the pre-eminence of them that "walk by faith!" God having "opened the eyes of their underſtanding," pours divine light into their ſouls, whereby they are enabled to "ſee Him that is inviſible," to ſee God, and the things of God. What their "eye had not ſeen, nor their ear heard, neither had it entered into their heart to conceive," God from time to time reveals to them, by the "unction of the Holy One, which teacheth them of all things." Having "entered into the holieſt by the blood of Jeſus," by that "new and living way," and being joined unto "the general aſſembly and church of the firſt born, and unto God the judge of all, and Jeſus the Mediator of the new covenant," each of theſe can ſay, "I live

live not, but Christ liveth in me; I now live that life, which is hid with Christ in God. And when Christ, who is *my* life shall appear, then *I* shall likewise appear with him in glory."

14. They that *live* by faith, *walk by faith*. But what is implied in this? They regulate all their judgments concerning good and evil, not with reference to visible and temporal things, but to things invisible and eternal. They think visible things to be of small value, because they pass away like a dream; but on the contrary, they account invisible things to be of high value, because they will never pass away. Whatever is invisible is eternal: The things that are not seen, do not perish. So the Apostle, "The things that are seen are temporal; but the things that are not seen are eternal." Therefore they that "walk by faith," do not desire the "things which are seen;" neither are they the object of their pursuit. They "set their affections on things above, not on things on the earth." They seek only the things which are "where Jesus sitteth at the right hand of God." Because they know "the things that are seen are temporal," passing away like a shadow, therefore they "look not at them," they desire them not, they account them as nothing; but "they look at the things which are not seen, that are eternal," that never pass away. By these they form their judgments of all things. They judge them to be good or evil, as they promote or hinder their welfare, not in time, but in eternity. They weigh whatever occurs, in this balance: What influence has it on my eternal state? They regulate all their tempers and passions, all

all their desires, joys and fears by this standard. They regulate all their thoughts and designs, all their words and actions, so as to prepare them for that invisible and eternal world, to which they are shortly going. They do not *dwell* but only *sojourn* here; not looking upon earth as their home, but only "travelling through Immanuel's ground to fairer worlds on high."

15. Brethren, are *you* of this number, who are now before God? Do *you* see him that "is invisible." Have you faith? Living faith? The faith of a child? Can you say, "The life that I now live, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me?" Do you "walk by faith?" Observe the question. I do not ask Whether you curse, or swear, or profane the sabbath, or live in any outward sin? I do not ask, Whether you do good, more or less? Or attend all the ordinances of God? But suppose you are blameless in all these respects, I ask in the name of God, By what standard do you judge of the value of things? By the visible or the invisible world? Bring the matter to an issue in a single instance: Which do you judge best, that your son should be a pious cobler, or a profane lord? Which appears to you most eligible, that your daughter should be a child of God, and walk on foot, or a child of the devil, and ride in a coach and six? When the question is, concerning marrying your daughter, If you consider her body more than her soul? Take knowledge of yourself! You are in the way to hell, and not to heaven; for you walk by sight, and not by faith. I do not ask, whether you live in any

outward

outward sin, or neglect,—But do you *seek*, in the general tenor of your life, "the things that are above," or the "things that are below?" Do you "set your affections on things above," or on "things of the earth?" If on the latter, you are as surely in the way of destruction, as a thief, or a common drunkard. My dear friends, let every man, every woman among you, deal honestly with yourselves. Ask your own heart, What am I seeking day by day? What am I desiring? What am I pursuing? Earth or heaven? The things that are seen, or the things that are not seen? What is your object, God or the world? As the Lord liveth, if the world is your object, still all your religion is vain.

16. See then, my dear brethren, that from this time at least, ye chuse the better part. Let your judgment of all the things round about you be according to the real value of things, with a reference to the invisible and eternal world. See that ye judge every thing fit to be pursued or shunned, according to the influence it will have on your eternal state. See that your affections, your desire, your joy, your hope, be not set on transient objects, not on things that fly as a shadow, that pass away like a dream; but on those that are incapable of change, that are incorruptible and fade not away: Those that remain the same, when heaven and earth "flee away, and there is no place found for them." See that in all you think, speak or do, the eye of your soul be single, fixt on "Him that is invisible, and the glories that shall be revealed." Then shall "your whole

whole body be full of light." Your whole soul shall enjoy the light of God's countenance. And you shall continually see "the light of the glorious love of God in the face of Jesus Christ."

17. See in particular that all your "desire be unto him, and unto the remembrance of his name." Beware of "foolish and hurtful desires:" Such as arise from any visible or temporal thing. All these St. John warns us of, under that general term "love of the world." It is not so much to the men of the world, as to the children of God, he gives that important direction, "Love not the world, neither the things of the world." Give no place to the "desire of the flesh:" The gratification of the outward senses, whether of the taste, or any other. Give no place to "the desire of the eye," the internal sense, or imagination, by gratifying it, either by grand things, or beautiful, or uncommon. Give no place to "the pride of life," the desire of wealth, of pomp, or of the honour that cometh of men. St. John confirms this advice, by a consideration parallel to that observation which St. Paul had made to the Corinthians; "For the world and the fashion of it passeth away." "The fashion of it," all worldly objects, business, pleasures, cares, whatever now attracts our regard, or attention, passeth away—is in the very act of passing, and will return no more. Therefore desire none of these fleeting things; but that glory which "abideth for ever."

18. Observe well: This is Religion, and this alone: This alone is true Christian Religion: Not

Not this or that opinion, or ſyſtem of opinions, be they ever ſo true, ever ſo ſciptural. It is true, this is commonly called Faith. But thoſe who ſuppoſe it to be Religion, are given up to a ſtrong deluſion, to believe a lie: And if they ſuppoſe it to be a ſure paſſport to heaven, are in the high road to hell. Obſerve well: *Religion* is not *harmleſſneſs*; which a careful obſerver of mankind properly terms *Helliſh harmleſſneſs*, as it ſends thouſands to the bottomleſs pit. It is not *Morality*, excellent as that is, except it be built on a right foundation, loving faith. But when otherwiſe, it is of no value in the ſight of God. It is not *Formality*, the moſt exact obſervance of all the ordinances of God. This too, unleſs it be built on the right foundation, is no more pleaſing to God, than "the cutting off a dog's neck." No: Religion is no leſs than living in eternity, and walking in eternity: And hereby walking in the love of God and man, in lowlineſs, meekneſs, and reſignation. This, and this alone, is that "life, which is hid with Chriſt in God." He alone, who experiences this, "dwells in God, and God in him." This alone is ſetting the crown upon Chriſt's head, and doing his "will on earth, as it is done in heaven."

19. It will eaſily be obſerved, that this is the very thing that men of the world call *Enthuſiaſm*. A word juſt fit for their purpoſe, becauſe no man can tell either the meaning, or even the derivation of it. If it has any determinate ſenſe, it means a ſpecies of religious madneſs. Hence, when you ſpeak your experience, they immediately cry out, "much religion

religion hath made thee mad." And all that you experience either of the invisible or of the eternal world, they suppose to be only the waking dreams of a heated imagination. It cannot be otherwise, when men born blind, take upon them to reason concerning light and colours. They will readily pronounce those to be insane, who affirm the existence of those things, whereof they have no conception.

20. From all that has been said, it may be seen with the utmost clearness, what is the nature of that fashionable thing called *Dissipation*. He that hath ears to hear, let him hear: It it the very quintessence of Atheism: It is artificial added to natural ungodliness. It is the art of forgetting God, of being altogether "without God in the world:" The art of excluding him, if not out of the world he has created, yet out of the minds of all his intelligent creatures. It is a total studied inattention to the whole invisible and eternal world: More especially to death, the gate of eternity, and to the important consequences of death, heaven and hell.

21. This is the real nature of *Dissipation*. And is it so harmless a thing, as it is usually thought? It is one of the choicest instruments of destroying immortal spirits, that was ever forged in the magazines of hell. It has been the means of plunging myriads of souls, that might have enjoyed the glory of God, into the everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels. It blots out all religion at one stroke, and levels man with the beasts that perish. All

ye

ye that fear God, flee from Diſſipation! Dread and abhor the very name of it. Labour to have God in all your thoughts! To have Eternity ever in your eye. "Look continually, not at the things that are ſeen, but at the things which are not ſeen." Let your hearts be fixed there, where "Chriſt ſitteth at the right hand of God," that whenſoever he calleth you, "an entrance may be miniſtered unto you abundantly into his everlaſting kingdom."

London, Dec. 30, 1788.

SERMON CXV.

The Unity of the Divine Being.

Mark xii. 23.

There is one God.

1. AND as there is one God, ſo there is one Religion and one Happineſs for all men. God never intended there ſhould be any more: And it is not poſſible there ſhould. Indeed in another ſenſe, as the Apoſtle obſerves, "there are gods many, and lords many." All the Heathen nations had their gods, and many, whole ſhoals of them. And generally, the more poliſhed they were, the more gods they heaped up to themſelves: But to us, to all that are favoured with the Chriſtian Revelation, "there is but one God," who declares of himſelf, "Is there any God beſide me? There is none; I know not any."

2. But who can ſearch out this God to perfection? None of the creatures that he has made. Only ſome of his attributes he hath been pleaſed to

to reveal to us in his word. Hence we learn, that God is an Eternal Being. "His goings forth are from everlasting," and will continue to everlasting. As he ever was, so he ever will be; as there was no beginning of his existence, so there will be no end. This is universally allowed to be contained in his very name, JEHOVAH: Which the Apostle John accordingly renders, "He that was, and that is, and that is to come." Perhaps it would be as proper to say, "He is from everlasting, to everlasting."

3. Nearly allied to the Eternity of God, is his Omnipresence. As he exists through infinite duration, so he cannot but exist through infinite space: according to his own question, equivalent to the strongest assertion, "Do not I fill heaven and earth? saith the Lord." (Heaven and earth, in the Hebrew idiom, implying the whole universe.) Which therefore, according to his own declaration, is filled with his presence.

4. This One, Eternal, Omnipresent Being, is likewise All-perfect. He has from Eternity to Eternity, all the perfections and infinitely more, than it ever did, or ever can enter into the heart of man to conceive: Yea, infinitely more than the angels in heaven can conceive. These perfections we usually term the attributes of God.

5. And he is Omnipotent, as well as Omnipresent: There can be no more bounds to his Power, than to his presence. He "hath a mighty arm; strong is his hand, and high is his right hand." He doth whatsoever pleaseth him, in the heavens, the earth, the sea, and in all deep places. With men, we know, many things are impossible; "But not with God; with him all

things are poſſible." Whenſoever he willeth, to do is preſent with him.

6. The Omniſcience of God is a clear and neceſſary conſequence of his Omnipreſence. If he is preſent in every part of the Univerſe, he cannot but know whatever is, or is done there: According to the word of St. James, "Known unto God are all his works," and the works of every creature, "from the beginning" of the world: Or rather, as the phraſe literally implies, "from eternity." His eyes are not only "over all the earth, beholding the evil and the good;" but likewiſe over the whole creation, yea, and the paths of uncreated night. Is there any difference between his knowledge and his wiſdom? If there be, is not his knowledge the more general term (at leaſt according to our weak conceptions,) and his wiſdom a particular branch of it? Namely, the knowing the end of every thing that exiſts, and the means of applying it to that end?

7. Holineſs is another of the attributes of the almighty, all-wiſe God. He is infinitely diſtant from every touch of evil. He "is light, and in him is no darkneſs at all." He is a God of unblemiſhed juſtice and truth: But above all in his mercy. This we may eaſily learn from that beautiful paſſage, in the thirty-fourth and fifth chapters of Exodus. "And Moſes ſaid, I beſeech thee, ſhew me thy glory. And the Lord deſcended in the cloud, and proclaimed the name of the LORD, the LORD, the LORD GOD, merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering, and abundant in goodneſs and truth; keeping mercy for thouſands, and forgiving iniquity, and tranſgreſſion, and ſin."

8. This

8. This God is a Spirit; not having ſuch a body, ſuch parts, or paſſions, as men have. It was the opinion both of the ancient Jews and the ancient Chriſtians, that He alone is a pure ſpirit, totally ſeparate from all matter: whereas they ſuppoſed all other ſpirits, even the higheſt angels, even Cherubim and Seraphim, to dwell in material vehicles, tho' of an exceeding light and ſubtle ſubſtance. At that point of duration, which the infinite wiſdom of God ſaw to be moſt proper, for reaſons which lie hid in the abyſs of his own underſtanding, not to be fathomed by any finite mind, God "called into being all that is," created the heavens and the earth, together with all that they contain. "All things were created by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made." He created man in particular, after his own image, to be "a picture of his own eternity." When he had raiſed man from the duſt of the earth, he breathed into him an immortal ſpirit. Hence he is peculiarly called "the Father of our ſpirits;" yea, "the Father of the ſpirits of all fleſh."

9. He "made all things," as the wiſe man obſerves, "for himſelf, for his glory they were created." Not "as if he needed any thing:" ſeeing "He giveth to all life, and breath, and all things." He made all things to be happy: He made man to be happy in himſelf. He is the proper center of ſpirits, for whom every created ſpirit was made. So true is that well known ſaying of the ancient Fathers, *Feciſti nos ad te: Et irrequietum eſt cor noſtrum, donec requieſcat in te.* Thou haſt made us for thyſelf: And our heart cannot reſt, till it reſteth in Thee

10. This observation gives us a clear answer to that question in the Assembly's Catechism, "For what end did God create man?" The answer is, "To glorify and enjoy him for ever." This is undoubtedly true; But is it quite clear, especially to men of ordinary capacities? Do the generality of common people understand that expression, "To glorify God?" No, no more than they understand Greek. And it is altogether above the capacity of children, to whom we can scarce ever speak plain enough. Now is not this the very principle that should be inculcated upon every human creature, "You are made to be happy in God," as soon as ever reason dawns? Should not every parent, as soon as a child begins to talk, or to run alone, say something of this kind, "See! what is that which shines so over your head? That we call the Sun. See, how bright it is! Feel how it warms you! It makes the grass to spring and every thing to grow! But God made the Sun. The Sun could not shine, nor warm, nor do any good without Him." In this plain and familiar way, a wise parent might many times in a day, say something of God; particularly insisting, "He made *you*; and he made you to be happy in him: And nothing else can make you happy." We cannot press this too soon. If you say, "Nay, but they cannot understand you when they are so young:" I answer, No, nor when they are fifty years old, unless God opens their understanding. And can He not do this at any age?

11. Indeed this should be prest on every human creature, young and old, the more earnestly and diligently, because so exceeding few, even

of

of thoſe that are called Chriſtians, ſeem to know any thing about it. Many indeed think of being happy with God in heaven: But the being happy in God on earth, never entered into their thoughts. The leſs ſo, becauſe from the time they came into the world, they are ſurrounded with idols. Such in turns are all "the things that are ſeen," (whereas God is not ſeen,) which all promiſe a happineſs independent of God. Indeed it is true, that

"Upright both in heart and will,
We by our God were made:
But we turn'd from good to ill,
And o'er the creatures ſtray'd:

"Multiplied our wand'ring thought,
Which firſt was fixt on God alone:
In ten thouſand objects ſought
The bliſs we loſt in one."

12. Theſe idols, theſe rivals of God are innumerable: But they may be nearly reduced to three parts. Firſt, Objects of ſenſe; ſuch as gratify one or more of our outward ſenſes. Theſe excite the firſt kind of "love of the world," which St. John terms, "the deſire of the fleſh." Secondly, Objects of the imagination; things that gratify our fancy, by grandeur, beauty, or novelty. All theſe make us fair promiſes of happineſs, and thereby prevent our ſeeking it in God. This the Apoſtle terms, "the deſire of the eyes;" Whereby chiefly the imagination is gratified. They are, thirdly, what St. John calls, "the pride of life." He ſeems to mean, honour, wealth, and whatever directly tends to engender pride.

13. But

13. But suppose we were guarded against all these, are there not other idols, which we have need to be apprehensive of: And idols therefore the more dangerous, because we suspect no danger from them? For is there any danger to be feared from our friends and relations? From the mutual endearments of husbands and wives, or of parents and children? Ought we not to bear a very tender affection to them? Ought we not to love them only less than God? Yea, and is there not a tender affection due to those, whom God has made profitable to our souls? Are we not commanded, to "esteem them very highly in love for their work's sake? All this is unquestionably true. And this very thing makes the difficulty. Who is sufficient for this, to go far enough herein, and no farther? To love them enough, and not too much? We can love a wife, a child, a friend, well enough, without loving the creature more than the Creator? Who is able to follow the caution which St. Paul gives to the Christians at Thessalonica, 1 Thess. iv. 5.?

14. I wish that weighty passage, (so strangely disguised in our translation) were duly considered. "Let every one of you know how to possess his vessel, (his wife) in sanctification and honour." So as neither to dishonour God or himself, nor to obstruct but further holiness. St. Paul goes on, Μη εν παθει επιθυμιας, which we render, "Not in the lust of concupiscence:—(What is this? It gives the English reader no conception at all. Παθος means any *violent* or *impetuous affection*. Επιθυμια is *desire*. By the two words the Apostle undoubtedly means, vehement and impetuous affections,)—"as the Gentiles who know not God:"

God:" And so may naturally seek happiness in a creature.

15. If by the grace of God, we have avoided or forsaken all these idols; there is still one more dangerous than all the rest, and that is, Religion. It will easily be conceived, I mean False Religion: That is, any Religion which does not imply, "the giving the heart to God." Such is, first, a Religion of Opinions, or what is commonly called, Orthodoxy. Into this snare fall thousands of those, who profess to hold "Salvation by Faith:" Indeed all of those who by Faith mean only a system of Arminian or Calvinian Opinions. Such is, secondly, a Religion of Forms, of barely outward worship, how constantly soever performed; yea, tho' we attend the Church service every day, and the Lord's Supper every Sunday. Such is, thirdly, a Religion of Works, of seeking the favour of God, by doing good to men. Such is, lastly, a Religion of Atheism; that is, every Religion whereof God is not laid for the foundation. In a word, a Religion wherein "God in Christ reconciling the world unto himself," is not the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last point.

16. True Religion is right tempers towards God and man. It is in two words, Gratitude and Benevolence: Gratitude to our Creator and supreme Benefactor, and benevolence to our fellow-creatures. In other words, it is the loving God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves.

17. It is in consequence of our knowing God loves us, that we love him, and love our neighbour as ourselves. Gratitude towards our Creator cannot

cannot but produce benevolence to our fellow-creatures. The love of Chriſt conſtrains us, not only to be harmleſs, to do no ill to our neighbour; but to be uſeful, to be "zealous of good works, as we have time to do good unto all men," and to be patterns to all, of true genuine morality, of juſtice, mercy and truth. This is religion, and this is happineſs: the happineſs for which we were made. This begins when we begin to know God, by the teaching of his own Spirit. As ſoon as the Father of Spirits reveals his Son in our hearts, and the Son reveals his Father, the love of God is ſhed abroad in our hearts: Then, and not till then, we are happy. We are happy firſt, in the conſciouſneſs of his favour, which indeed is better than life itſelf: Next, in the conſtant communion with the Father, and with his Son, Jeſus Chriſt: Then in all the heavenly tempers, which he hath wrought in us by his Spirit: Again, in the teſtimony of his Spirit, that all our works pleaſe him: And laſtly, in the teſtimony of our own ſpirit, that "in ſimplicity and godly ſincerity we have had our converſation in the world." Standing faſt in this liberty from ſin and ſorrow, wherewith Chriſt hath made them free, real Chriſtians "rejoice evermore, pray without ceaſing, and in every thing give thanks." And their happineſs ſtill increaſes, as they "grow up into the meaſure of the ſtature of the fulneſs of Chriſt."

18. But how little is this religion experienced, or even thought of, in the Chriſtian world? On the contrary, what reaſon have we to take up the lamentation of a dying ſaint, (Mr. Halliburton, of St. Andrews, in Scotland,) "O Sirs, I am afraid a kind of *rational* religion is more and more

more prevailing amongſt us; a religion that has nothing of Chriſt belonging to it: Nay, that has not only nothing of Chriſt, but nothing of God in it!" And indeed how generally does this prevail, not only among profeſſed Infidels, but alſo among thoſe who call themſelves Chriſtians, who profeſs to believe the Bible to be the word of God! Thus our own country-man, Mr. Woollaſton, in that elaborate work, "The Religion of Nature delineated," preſents us with a complete ſyſtem of religion, without any thing of God about it, without being beholden in any degree, to either the Jewiſh or Chriſtian revelation. Thus Monſieur Burlomachi (of Geneva) in his curious treatiſe on "The Law of Nature," does not make any more uſe of the Bible than if he had never ſeen it. And thus the late Profeſſor Hutchinſon, of Glaſgow, (a ſtranger writer than either of the other,) is ſo far from grounding virtue on either the fear or the love of God, that he quite ſhuts God out of the queſtion; not ſcrupling to declare in expreſs terms, That "a regard to God is *inconſiſtent with* virtue: Inſomuch, that if in doing a beneficent action, you expect God to reward it, the virtue of the action is loſt: It is then not a virtuous, but a ſelfiſh action!"

19. Perhaps indeed there are not many who carry the matter to ſo great a length. But how great is the number of thoſe, who allowing religion to conſiſt of two branches, our duty to God, and our duty to our neighbour, entirely forget the firſt part, and put the ſecond part for the whole, for the entire duty of man. Thus almoſt all men of letters, both in England, France, Germany, yea, and all the civilized countries of Europe,

Europe, extol *humanity* to the ſkies, as the very eſſence of religion. To this the great Triumvirate, Rouſſeau, Voltaire, and David Hume, have contributed all their labours, ſparing no pains to eſtabliſh a religion, which ſhould ſtand on its own foundation, independent on any revelation whatever, yea, not ſuppoſing even the being of a God. So leaving him, if he has any being, to himſelf, they have found out both a religion and a happineſs, which have no relation at all to God, nor any dependence upon him.

20. It is no wonder that this religion ſhould grow faſhionable, and ſpread far and wide in the world. But call it *humanity*, *virtue*, *morality*, or what you pleaſe, it is neither better nor worſe than Atheiſm. Men hereby wilfully and deſignedly put aſunder what God has joined, the duties of the firſt and the ſecond table. It is ſeparating the love of our neighbour from the love of God. It is a plauſible way of thruſting God out of the world he has made. They can do the buſineſs without him, and ſo either drop him entirely, not conſidering him at all: Or ſuppoſe that ſince

> "He gave things their beginning
> And ſet this whirligig a ſpinning,"

he has not concerned himſelf with theſe trifles, but let every thing take its own courſe.

21. On the contrary, we have the fulleſt evidence that the Eternal, Omnipreſent, Almighty, All-wiſe Spirit, as he created all things, ſo he continually ſuperintends whatever he has created. He governs all, not only to the bounds of creation, but through the utmoſt extent of ſpace: And not only through the ſhort time that is meaſured

measured by the earth and sun, but from everlasting to everlasting. We know, that as all nature, so all religion, and all happiness, depend on him: And we know that whoever teach to seek happiness without him, are monsters, and the pests of society.

22. But after all the vain attempts of learned or unlearned men, it will be found, as there is but one God, so there is but one happiness, and one religion. And both of these centre in God. Both by scripture and by experience we know, that an unholy, and therefore an unhappy man, seeking rest but finding none, is sooner or later convinced, that sin is the ground of his misery, and cries out of the deep to Him that is able to save, "God be merciful to me a sinner." It is not long before he finds "redemption in the blood of Jesus, even the forgiveness of sins." Then "the Father reveals his Son" in his heart, and he "calls Jesus, Lord, by the Holy Ghost." And then the love of God is "shed abroad in his heart, by the Holy Spirit which is given unto him." From this principle springs real, disinterested benevolence to all mankind, making him humble, meek, gentle to all men, easy to be intreated, to be convinced of what is right, and persuaded to what is good, inviolably patient, with a thankful acquiescence in every step of his adorable Providence. This is Religion, even the whole mind which was also in Christ Jesus. And has any man the impudence or the stupidity to deny, that this is happiness? Yea, that it

"Yields more of happiness below,
Than victors in a triumph know?"

23. There can be no doubt but from this love to God and man, a ſuitable converſation will follow. His "communication," that is, diſcourſe, will "be always in grace, ſeaſoned with ſalt, and meet to miniſter grace to the hearers." He will always "open his mouth with wiſdom, and there will be in his tongue the law of kindneſs." Hence his affectionate words will "diſtil as the dew, and as the rain upon the tender herb." And men will know, "it is not he only that ſpeaks, but the Spirit of the Father that ſpeaketh in him." His actions will ſpring from the ſame ſource with his words, even from the abundance of a loving heart. And while all theſe aim at the glory of God, and tend to this one point, whatever he does, he may truly ſay,

"End of my every action thou,
In all things thee I ſee!
Accept my hallow'd labour now!
I do it as to thee!"

24. He to whom this character belongs, and he alone, is a Chriſtian. To him the one, eternal, omnipreſent, all perfect Spirit, is the Alpha and Omega, the firſt and the laſt. Not his Creator only, but his Suſtainer, his Preſerver, his Governor: Yea, his Father, his Saviour, Sanctifier and Comforter. This God is his God and his all, in time and in eternity. It is the benevolence ſpringing from this root, which is pure and undefiled religion. But if it be built on any other foundation, as it is of no avail in the ſight of God, ſo it brings no real, ſolid, permanent happineſs to man, but leaves him ſtill a poor, dry, indigent, and diſſatisfied creature.

25. Let

25. Let all therefore that desire to please God, condescend to be taught of God, and take care to walk in that path, which God himself hath appointed. Beware of taking half of this religion for the whole, but take both parts of it together. And see that you begin where God himself begins, "Thou shalt have no other God before me." Is not this the first, our Lord himself being the judge, as well as the great commandment? First, therefore, see that ye love God; next your neighbour, every child of man. From this fountain let every temper, every affection, every passion flow. So shall that "mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus." Let all your thoughts, words and actions spring from this. So shall you "inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world."

Dublin, April 9, 1789.

SERMON CXVI.

IS THERE NO BALM IN GILEAD?

JEREMIAH viii. 22.

Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?

1 THIS question, as here proposed by the prophet, relates only to a particular people, the Children of *Israel*. But I would here consider it in a general sense, with relation to all mankind. I would seriously inquire, Why has Christianity done so little good in the world? Is it not the balm, the outward means, which the Great Physician has given to men, to restore their spiritual health? Why then is it not restored? You say, Because of the deep and the universal corruption of human nature. Most true. But here is the very difficulty. Was it not intended by our all-wise and almighty Creator, to be the remedy for that corruption? An universal remedy for an universal evil. But it has not

not anſwered this intention. It never did. It does not at anſwer it at this day. The diſeaſe ſtill remains in its full ſtrength; wickedneſs of every kind, vice inward and outward in all its forms, ſtill overſpread the face of the earth.

2. O Lord God, "righteous art thou! Yet let us plead with thee!" How is this? Haſt thou forgotten the world which thou haſt made? Which thou haſt created for thy own glory? Canſt thou deſpiſe the work of thy own hands, the purchaſe of thy Son's blood? Thou haſt given medicine to heal our ſickneſs: yet our ſickneſs is not healed. Yet darkneſs covers the earth, and thick darkneſs the people. Yea,

"Darkneſs, ſuch as devils feel,
"Iſſuing from the pit of hell."

3. What a myſtery is this? That Chriſtianity ſhould have done ſo little good in the world? Can any account of this be given? Can any reaſons be aſſigned for it? Does it not ſeem that one reaſon it has done ſo little good is this, Becauſe it is ſo little known? Certainly it can do no good, where it is not known. But it is not known at this day to the far greater part of the inhabitants of the earth. In the laſt century our ingenious and laborious countryman, Mr. *Brerewood*, travelled over great part of the known world, on purpoſe to enquire, ſo far as was poſſible, what proportion the Chriſtians bear to the Heathens and Mahometans. And according to his computation (probably the moſt accurate which has yet been made,) I ſuppoſe mankind to be divided into thirty parts, nineteen parts of which are ſtill open Heathens, having no more knowledge of Chriſtianity, than the beaſts that

perith. And we may add to these the numerous nations, which have been discovered in the present century. Add to these such as profess the Mahometan Religion, and utterly scorn Christianity: and five parts out of thirty of mankind are not so much as nominally Christians. So then five parts of mankind out of six, are totally ignorant of Christianity. It is therefore no wonder, that five in six of mankind, perhaps nine in ten, have no advantage from it.

4. But why is it, that so little advantage is derived from it to the Christian world? Are Christians any better than other men, are they better than Mahometans or Heathens? To say the truth, it is well if they are not worse: worse than either Mahometans or Heathens. In many respects they are abundantly worse: but then they are not properly Christians. The generality of these though they bear the Christian name, do not know what Christianity is. They no more understand it than they do *Greek* or *Hebrew*: therefore they can be no better for it. What do the Christians, so called, of the Eastern Church, dispersed throughout the *Turkish* dominions, know of genuine Christianity? Those of the *Morea*, of *Circassia*, *Mengrelia*, *Georgia*? Are they not the very dregs of mankind? And have we reason to think that those of the Southern Church, those inhabiting *Abissinia*, have any more conception than them, of worshipping God in spirit and in truth?" Look we nearer home. See the Northern Churches, those that are under the patriarch of *Moscow*. How exceeding little do they know, either of outward or inward Christianity? How many thousands, yea, myriads of those poor savages, know nothing of Christianity

Chriſtianity but the name? How little more do they know than the heathen *Tartars* on the one hand, or the heathen *Chineſe* on the other?

5. But is not Chriſtianity well known at leaſt to all the inhabitants of the weſtern world? A great part of which is eminently termed *Chriſtendom*, or the land of Chriſtians. Part of theſe are ſtill members of the Church of *Rome:* part are termed *Proteſtants*. As to the former, *Portugueſe*, *Spaniards*, *Italians*, *French*, *Germans*, what do the bulk of them know of ſcriptural Chriſtianity? Having had frequent opportunity of converſing with many of theſe, both at home and abroad, I am bold to affirm, that they are in general totally ignorant, both as to the theory and practice of Chriſtianity: ſo that they are *periſhing* by thouſands *for lack of knowledge*, for want of knowing the very firſt principles of Chriſtianity.

6. "But ſurely this cannot be the caſe of the *Proteſtants* in *France*, *Switzerland*, *Germany*, and *Holland?* Much leſs in *Denmark* and *Sweden?*" Indeed I hope it is not altogether. I am perſuaded, there are among them many knowing Chriſtians. But I fear we muſt not think that one in ten, if one in fifty is of this number: certainly not, if we may form a judgment of them, by thoſe we find in *Great Britain* and *Ireland*. Let us ſee how matters ſtand at our own door. Do the people of *England* in general, (not the higheſt or the loweſt; for theſe uſually know nothing of the matter: but people of the middle rank,) underſtand Chriſtianity? Do they conceive what it is? Can they give an intelligible account, either of the ſpeculative or practical part of it? What know they of the very

very firſt principles of it? Of the natural and moral attributes of God? Of his particular providence? Of the redemption of man? Of the offices of Chriſt? Of the operations of the Holy Ghoſt? Of juſtification? Of the new birth? Of inward and outward ſanctification? Speak of any of theſe things to the firſt ten perſons you are in company with: and will you not find nine out of the ten ignorant of the whole affair? And are not moſt of the inhabitants of the Scotch Highlands, full as ignorant as theſe? Yea, and the common people in *Ireland?* (I mean, the Proteſtants, of whom alone we are now ſpeaking:) Make a fair enquiry, not only in the country cabins, but in the cities of *Cork*, *Waterford*, *Limerick*: Yea, in *Dublin* itſelf. How few know what Chriſtianity means? How ſmall a number will you find, that have any conception of the analogy of faith? Of the connected chain of ſcripture truths, and their relation to each other? Namely, The natural corruption of man; juſtification by faith, the new birth, inward and outward holineſs? It muſt be acknowledged by all competent judges, who converſe freely with their neighbours in theſe kingdoms, that a vaſt majority of them know no more of theſe things, than they do of *Hebrew* or *Arabic*. And what good can Chriſtianity do theſe, who are ſo totally ignorant of it?

7. However, in ſome parts, both of *England* and *Ireland*, ſcriptural Chriſtianity is well known: eſpecially in *London*, *Briſtol*, *Dublin*, and almoſt all the large and populous cities and towns of both kingdoms. In theſe every branch of Chriſtianity is openly and largely declared: and thouſands upon thouſands continually hear and receive "the

"the truth as it is in Jesus." Why is it then, that even in these parts Christianity has had so little effect? Why are the generality of the people in all these places Heathens still? No better than the Heathens of *Africa* or *America*, either in their tempers or in their lives. Now how is this to be accounted for? I conceive thus. It was a common saying among the Christians in the primitive Church, "The soul and the body make a man: the spirit and discipline make a Christian:" implying that none could be real Christians, without the help of Christian discipline. But if this be so, is it any wonder that we find so few Christians, for where is Christian discipline? In what part of *England* (to go no farther) is Christian discipline added to Christian doctrine? Now whatever doctrine is preached, where there is not discipline, it cannot have its full effect upon the hearers.

8. To bring the matter closer still. Is not scriptural Christianity preached, and generally known among the people commonly called *Methodists?* Impartial persons allow it is. And have they not Christian discipline too, in all the essential branches of it, regularly and constantly exercised? Let those who think any essential part of it is wanting, point it out, and it shall not be wanting long. Why then are not these altogether Christians? Who have both Christian doctrine and Christian discipline? Why is not the spiritual health of the people called *Methodists* recovered? Why is not all that "mind in us, which was also in Christ Jesus?" Why have we not learned of him, our very first lesson, to be meek and lowly of heart? To say with Him, in all circumstances of life, "Not as I will,

will, but as thou wilt! I come not to do my own will, but the will of him that sent me?" Why are not we "crucified to the world, and the world crucified to us? Dead to the desires of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, and the pride of life?" Why do not all of us live "the life that is hid with Christ in God?" O why do not we, that have all possible helps, "walk as Christ also walked?" Hath he not left us an example that we might tread in his steps? But do we regard either his example or precepts? To instance only in one point. Who regards those solemn words, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth?" Of the three rules which are laid down on this head, in the sermon on "the mammon of unrighteousness," you may find many that observe the first rule, namely, "Gain all you can." You may find a few that observe the second, "Save all you can:" but how many have you found, that observe the third rule, "Give all you can?" Have you reason to believe, that five hundred of these are to be found among fifty thousand *Methodists?* And yet nothing can be more plain, than that all who observe the two first rules without the third, will be twofold more the children of hell, than ever they were before.

9 O that God would enable me once more, before I go hence and am no more seen, to lift up my voice like a trumpet to those who *gain* and *save* all they can, but do not give all they can. Ye are the men, some of the chief men, who continually grieve the Holy Spirit of God, and in a great measure stop his gracious influence from descending on our assemblies. Many of your brethren, beloved of God, have not food to eat; they

they have not raiment to put on; they have not a place where to lay their head. And why are they thus diſtreſt? Becauſe *you* impiouſly, unjuſtly, and cruelly detain from them, what your Maſter and theirs lodges in your hands, on purpoſe to ſupply *their* wants! See that poor member of Chriſt pinched with hunger, ſhivering with cold, half naked! Meantime you have plenty of this world's goods, of meat, drink, and apparel. In the name of God, what are you doing? Do you neither fear God, nor regard man? Why do you not deal your bread to the hungry? And cover the naked with a garment? Have you laid out in your own coſtly apparel, what would have anſwered both thoſe intentions? Did God command you ſo to do? Does he commend you for ſo doing? Did he intruſt you with *his* (not *your*) goods for this end? And does he now ſay, "Servant of God, well done?" You well know he does not. This idle expence has no approbation, either from God or your own conſcience. But you ſay, You can *afford* it! O be aſhamed, to take ſuch miſerable nonſenſe into your mouths. Never more utter ſuch ſtupid cant, ſuch palpable abſurdity! Can any ſteward *afford* to be an errant knave? To waſte his Lord's goods? Can any ſervant *afford* to lay out his Maſter's money, any otherwiſe than his Maſter appoints him? So far from it, that whoever does this, ought to be excluded from a Chriſtian Society.

10. "But is it poſſible, to ſupply all the poor in our Society with the neceſſaries of life?" It *was* poſſible once to do this, in a larger Society than this. In the firſt Church at Jeruſalem, "there was not any among them that lacked, but

but diſtribution was made to every one, according as he had need." And we have full proof that it may be ſo ſtill. It is ſo among the people called *Quakers*. Yea, and among the *Moravians* ſo called. And why ſhould it not be ſo with *us*? "Becauſe they are ten times richer than us." Perhaps fifty times. And yet we are able enough, if we were equally willing to do this.

A gentleman (a Methodiſt) told me ſome years ſince, "I ſhall leave forty thouſand pounds among my children." Now ſuppoſe he had left them but twenty thouſand, and given the other twenty thouſand to God and the poor; would God have ſaid to him, "Thou fool?" And this would have ſet all the Society far above want.

11. But I will not talk of giving to God, or leaving half your fortune. You might think this to be too high a price for heaven. I will come to lower terms. Are there not a few among you that could give a hundred pounds, perhaps ſome that could give a thouſand, and yet leave your children as much as would help them to work out *their* own ſalvation? With two thouſand pounds, and not much leſs, we could ſupply the preſent wants of all our poor, and put them in a way of ſupplying their own wants, for the time to come. Now ſuppoſe this could be done, are we clear before God, while it is not done? Is not the neglect of it one cauſe, why ſo many are ſtill ſick and weak among you? And that both in ſoul and in body? That they ſtill grieve the Holy Spirit, by preferring the faſhions of the world to the commands of God? And, I many times doubt, whether we Preachers are not in ſome meaſure partakers of their ſin? I am in doubt whether it is not a kind of partiality. I

doubt,

doubt, whether it is not a great mercy to keep them in our Society? May it not hurt their ſouls, by encouraging them to perſevere, in walking contrary to the Bible? And may it not in ſome meaſure intercept the ſalutary influences of the bleſſed Spirit, upon the whole Community?

12. I am diſtreſt. I know not what to do. I ſee what I might have done once. I might have ſaid peremtorily and expreſsly, "Here I am: I and my Bible. I will not, I dare not vary from this book, either in great things or ſmall. I have no power to diſpenſe with one jot or tittle of what is contained therein. I am determined to be a Bible Chriſtian, not almoſt, but altogether. Who will meet me on this ground? Join me on this, or not at all." With regard to dreſs in particular, I might have been as firm (and I now ſee it would have been far better) as either the people called *Quakers*, or the *Moravian* Brethren. I might have ſaid, "This is *our* manner of dreſs, which we know is both ſcriptural and rational. If you join with us, you are to dreſs as we do: but you need not join us unleſs you pleaſe." But alas! the time is now paſt. And what I can do now, I cannot tell.

13. But to return to the main queſtion. Why has Chriſtianity done ſo little good, even among us? Among the Methodiſts? Among them that hear and receive the whole Chriſtian Doctrine, and that have Chriſtian Diſcipline added thereto, in the moſt eſſential parts of it? Plainly becauſe we have forgot, or at leaſt, not duly attended to thoſe ſolemn words of our Lord; "If any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs daily, and follow me." It was the remark of a holy man ſeveral

years ago, "Never was there before a people in the Christian Church, who had so much of the power of God among them, with so little self-denial." Indeed the work of God does go on, and in a surprizing manner, notwithstanding this capital defect; but it cannot go on in the same degree, as it otherwise would: neither can the word of God have its full effect, unless the hearers of it "deny themselves, and take up their cross daily."

14. It would be easy to shew, in how many respects the Methodists in general, are deplorably wanting in the practice of Christian Self-denial: from which indeed they have been continually frighted by the silly outcries of the Antinomians. To instance only in one. While we were at *Oxford*, the rule of every Methodist was, (unless in case of sickness) to *fast* every Wednesday and Friday in the year, in imitation of the Primitive Church, for which they had the highest reverence. Now this practice of the Primitive Church is universally allowed. "Who does not know, says *Epiphanius*, an ancient writer, that the fasts of the fourth and sixth days of the week (Wednesday and Friday) are observed by the Christians throughout the whole world?" So they were by the Methodists for several years; by them all, without any exception. But afterwards some in *London* carried this to excess, and fasted so as to impair their health. It was not long before others made this a pretence for not fasting at all. And I fear there are now thousands of Methodists so called, both in *England* and *Ireland*, who, following the same bad example, have entirely left off fasting: who are so far from fasting twice in the week (as all the stricter Pharisees did,) that they

they do not fast twice in the month. Yea, are there not some of you who do not fast one day, from the beginning of the year to the end? But what excuse can there be for this? I do not say for those that call themselves members of the Church of *England*; but for any who profess to believe the scripture to be the word of God? Since, according to this, the man that never fasts, is no more in the way to heaven than the man that never prays.

15. But can any one deny that the members of the Church of *Scotland* fast constantly? Particularly on their sacramental occasions. In some parishes they return only once a year, but in others, suppose in large cities, they occur twice, or even thrice a year. Now it is well known there is always a fast-day in the week preceding the administration of the Lord's Supper. But occasionally looking into a book of accounts in one of their vestries, I observed, "So much set down *for the dinners* of the Ministers on the fast-day!" And I am informed there is the same article in them all. And is there any doubt, but the people fast just as their Ministers do? But what a farce is this? What a miserable burlesque upon a plain Christian duty! O that the General Assembly would have regard to the honour of their nation! Let them roll away from it this shameful reproach, by their inforcing the duty, or removing that article from their books. Let it never appear there any more! Let it vanish away for ever.

16. But why is self-denial in general so little practised at present among the Methodists? Why is so exceeding little of it to be found even in the oldest and largest Societies? The more

I obſerve and conſider things, the more clearly it appears, what is the cauſe of this in *London*, in *Briſtol*, in *Birmingham*, in *Mancheſter*, in *Leeds*, in *Dublin*, in *Cork*. The Methodiſts grow more and more ſelf-indulgent, becauſe they *grow rich*. Although many of them are ſtill deplorably poor, ("Tell it not in Gath; publiſh it not in the ſtreets of Aſhkelon!") yet many others, in the ſpace of twenty, thirty, or forty years, are twenty, thirty, yea a hundred times richer than they were when they firſt entered the Society. And it is an obſervation which admits of few exceptions, that nine in ten of theſe, decreaſed in grace, in the ſame proportion as they increaſed in wealth. Indeed, according to the natural tendency of riches, we cannot expect it to be otherwiſe.

17. But how aſtoniſhing a thing is this? How can we underſtand it? Does it not ſeem (and yet this cannot be!) that Chriſtianity, true ſcriptural Chriſtianity, has a tendency, in proceſs of time, to undermine and deſtroy itſelf? For wherever true Chriſtianity ſpreads, it muſt cauſe diligence and frugality, which, in the natural courſe of things, muſt beget riches. And riches naturally beget pride, love of the world, and every temper that is deſtructive of Chriſtianity. Now if there be no way to prevent this, Chriſtianity is inconſiſtent with itſelf, and of conſequence, cannot ſtand, cannot continue long among any people: ſince, wherever it generally prevails, it ſaps its own foundation.

18. But is there no way to prevent this? To continue Chriſtianity among a people? Allowing that diligence and frugality muſt produce riches, is there no means to hinder riches from deſtroying the religion of thoſe that poſſeſs them? I can

I can see only one possible way: find out another who can. Do you gain all you can, and save all you can? Then you must in the nature of things grow rich. Then if you have any desire to escape the damnation of hell, *give* all you can? otherwise I can have no more hope of your salvation, than for that of *Judas Iscariot*

19. I call God to record upon my soul, that I advise no more than I practise. I do, blessed be God, gain, and save, and give all I can. And so, I trust in God, I shall do, while the breath of God is in my nostrils. But what then? I count all things but loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus, my Lord! Still

I give up every plea beside,
Lord, I am damn'd! but thou hast died!

Dublin, July 2, 1789.

SERMON CXVII.

On Not Knowing Christ After The Flesh.

2 Corinthians v. 16.

Henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we did know Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more.

1. I Have long desired to see something clearly and intelligibly wrote on these words. This is doubtless a point of no small importance: it enters deep into the nature of Religion: and yet what treatise have we in the *English* language, which is written upon it? Possibly there may be such; but none of them has come to my notice, no, not so much as a single sermon.

2. This is here introduced by the apostle in a very solemn manner. The words literally translated run thus: *He died for all, that they might live*—all who live upon the earth, *might not henceforth*—from the moment they knew him, *live unto themselves*—seek their own honour, or profit, or pleasure, *but unto him*—in righteousness and

and true holineſs, ver. 15. *So that we from this time*—that we know him by faith, *know no one*, either the reſt of the apoſtles, or you, or any other perſon, *after the fleſh*. This uncommon expreſſion, on which the whole doctrine depends, ſeems to mean, We regard no man, according to his former ſtate, his country, riches, power or wiſdom. We conſider all men only in their ſpiritual ſtate, and as they ſtand related to a better world. "Yea, if we have known even Chriſt after the fleſh,"—which undoubtedly they had done, beholding and loving him as a man, with a natural affection, yet now we know him ſo no more. We no more know him as a man, by his face, ſhape, voice, or manner of converſation. We no more think of him as a man, or love him under that character.

3. The meaning then of this ſtrongly figurative expreſſion, appears to be no other than this. From the time that we are created anew in Chriſt Jeſus, we do not think, or ſpeak, or act, with regard to our bleſſed Lord, as a mere man. We do not now uſe any expreſſion with relation to Chriſt, which may not be applied to him not only as he is man, but as he is *God over all, bleſſed for ever*.

4. Perhaps in order to place this in a clearer light, and at the ſame time guard againſt dangerous errors, it may be well to inſtance in ſome of thoſe, that in the moſt plain and palpable manner "know Chriſt after the fleſh." We may rank among the firſt of theſe the *Socinians*, thoſe who flatly "deny the Lord that bought them;" who not only do not allow him to be the ſupreme God, but deny him to be any God at all. I believe the moſt eminent of theſe that has appeared in

in *England*, at leaſt in the preſent century, was a man of great learning and uncommon abilities, Dr. *John Taylor*, for many years Paſtor at *Norwich*, afterwards Preſident at the Academy at *Warrington*. Yet it cannot be denied, that he treats our Lord with great civility: he gives him very good words: he terms him "a very worthy perſonage," yea, "a man of conſummate virtue."

5. Next to theſe are the Arians. But I would not be thought to place theſe in the ſame rank with the *Socinians*. There is a conſiderable difference between them. For, whereas the former deny Chriſt to be any God at all, the latter do not: they only deny him to be *the great God?* They willingly allow, nay, contend, that he is a *little God*. But this is attended with a peculiar inconvenience. It totally deſtroys the unity of the Godhead. For, if there be a great God, and a little God, there muſt be two Gods. But waving this, and keeping to the point before us. All who ſpeak of Chriſt as inferior to the Father, though it be ever ſo little, do undoubtedly "know him after the fleſh:" not as "the brightneſs of the Father's glory, the expreſs image of his perſon, as upholding, bearing up all things, both in heaven and earth, by the word of his power," the ſame powerful word, whereby of old time he called them all into being.

6. There are ſome of theſe, who have been bold to claim that great and good man Dr. *Watts*, as one of their own opinion: and in order to prove him ſo, they have quoted that fine Soliloquy, which is publiſhed in his poſthumous works. Yet impartial men will not allow their claim, without ſtronger proof than has yet appeared. But if he is clear of this charge, he is not

not equally clear, of "knowing Christ after the flesh," in another sense. I was not aware of this, but read all his works with almost equal admiration, when a person of deep piety as well as judgment, was occasionally remarking, "That some of the Hymns printed in his *Horæ Lyricæ*, dedicated to Divine Love, were (as he phrased it) too *amorous*, and fitter to be addrest by a lover to his fellow-mortal, than by a sinner to the Most High God." I doubt, whether there are not some other writers, who, though they believe the Godhead of Christ, yet speak in the same unguarded manner.

7. Can we affirm, that the Hymns published by a late great man (whose memory I love and esteem) are free from this fault? Are they not full of expressions, which strongly savour of "knowing Christ after the flesh?" Yea, and in a more gross manner, than any thing which was ever before published in the *English* tongue. What pity is it, that those coarse expressions should appear in many truly spiritual Hymns! How often in the midst of excellent verses, are lines inserted which disgrace those that precede and follow? Why should not all the compositions in that book, be not only as poetical, but likewise as rational and as scriptural as many of them are acknowledged to be?

8. It was between fifty and sixty years ago, that by the gracious Providence of God, my brother and I in our voyage to *America*, became acquainted with the (so called) *Moravian Brethren*. We quickly took knowledge what spirit they were of, six and twenty of them being in the same ship with us. We not only contracted much esteem, but a strong affection for them. Every

Every day we converſed with them, and conſulted them on all occaſions. I tranſlated many of their Hymns for the uſe of our own congregations. Indeed, as I durſt not implicitly follow any man, I did not take all that lay before me, but ſelected thoſe which I judged to be moſt ſcriptural, and moſt ſuitable to ſound experience. Yet I am not ſure, that I have taken ſufficient care, to pare off every improper word or expreſſion, every one that may ſeem to border on a familiarity, which does not ſo well ſuit the mouth of a worm of the earth, when addreſſing himſelf to the God of heaven. I have indeed particularly endeavoured, in all the Hymns which are addreſſed to our bleſſed Lord, to avoid every *fondling* expreſſion, and to ſpeak as to the Moſt High God, to him that is "in glory equal with the Father, in majeſty coeternal."

9. Some will probably think, that I have been over-ſcrupulous, with regard to one particular word, which I never uſe myſelf either in verſe or proſe, in praying or preaching, though it is very frequently uſed by modern Divines, both of the *Romiſh* and *Reformed* Churches. It is the word *dear*. Many of theſe frequently ſay, both in preaching, in prayer, and in giving thanks, "Dear Lord, or dear Saviour:" and my Brother uſed the ſame in many of his Hymns, even as long as he lived. But may I not aſk, Is not this uſing too much familiarity with the great Lord of heaven and earth? Is there any ſcripture, any paſſage, either in the Old or New Teſtament which juſtifies this manner of ſpeaking? Does any of the inſpired writers make uſe of it, even in the poetical ſcriptures? Perhaps ſome would anſwer, "Yes, the apoſtle *Paul* uſes it. He ſays, *God's*

God's dear Son." I reply, firſt, This does not reach the caſe: for the word which we render *dear*, is not here addreſt *to Chriſt* at all, but only ſpoken *of him*. Therefore it is no precedent of, or juſtification of our addreſſing it *to him*. I reply, ſecondly, It is not the ſame word. Tranſlated literally, the ſentence runs, not *his dear Son*, but *the Son of his love*, or *his beloved Son*. Therefore I ſtill doubt, whether any of the inſpired writers ever addreſſes the word either to the Father or the Son. Hence I cannot but adviſe all lovers of the Bible, if they uſe the expreſſion at all, to uſe it very ſparingly, ſeeing the ſcripture affords neither command nor precedent for it. And ſurely "if any man ſpeaks," either in preaching or prayer, he "ſhould ſpeak as the oracles of God!"

10. Do we not frequently uſe this unſcriptural expreſſion of our bleſſed Lord, in private converſation alſo? And are we not then eſpecially apt to ſpeak of him as a mere man? Particularly when we are deſcribing his ſufferings, how eaſily do we ſlide into this? We do well to be cautious in this matter. Here is not room for indulging a warm imagination. I have ſometimes almoſt ſcrupled ſinging (even in the midſt of my Brother's excellent Hymn)

"That dear, diſfigured face."

or that glowing expreſſion,

"Drop thy warm blood upon my heart."

Leſt it ſhould ſeem to imply the forgetting I am ſpeaking of "the man, that is my fellow, ſaith the Lord of hoſts." Although he ſo "humbled himſelf as to take upon him the form of a ſervant!

to

to be found in fashion as a man:" yea, though he "was obedient unto death, even the death of the cross:" yet let it ever be remembered, that "he thought it not robbery to be equal with God." And let our hearts still cry out, "Thou art exceeding glorious: thou art clothed with majesty and honour."

11. Perhaps some may be afraid, lest the refraining from these warm expressions, or even gently checking them, should check the fervour of our devotion. It is very possible it may check, or even prevent some kind of fervour, which has passed for devotion. Possibly it may prevent loud shouting, horrid, unnatural screaming, repeating the same words twenty or thirty times, jumping two or three feet high, and throwing about the arms or legs, both of men and women, in a manner shocking not only to religion, but to common decency. But it never will check, much less prevent true scriptural devotion. It will rather enliven the prayer that is properly addrest to Him, who, though he was very man, yet was very God. Who, though he was born of a woman to redeem man, yet was God from everlasting and world without end.

12. And let it not be thought, that the "knowing Christ after the flesh," the considering him as a mere man, and, in consequence, using such language in public as well as private, as is suitable to those conceptions of him, is a thing of a purely indifferent nature, or however of no great moment. On the contrary, the using this improper familiarity with God our Creator, our Redeemer, our Governor, is naturally productive of very evil faults. And that not only in

those

thoſe that ſpeak, but alſo to thoſe that hear them. It has a direct tendency to abate that tender reverence due to the Lord their Governor. It inſenſibly damps

" That ſpeechleſs awe, which dares not move,
And all the ſilent heaven of love."

It is impoſſible we ſhould accuſtom ourſelves to this odious and indecent familiarity with our Maker, while we preſerve in our minds a lively ſenſe of what is painted ſo ſtrongly in thoſe ſolemn lines,

" Dark with exceſſive bright his ſkirts appear,
Yet dazzle heaven, that brighteſt Seraphim
Approach not, but with both wings veil their eyes."

13. Now, would not every ſober Chriſtian ſincerely deſire, conſtantly to experience ſuch a love to his Redeemer (ſeeing he is God as well as man) as is mixt with angelic fear? Is it not this very temper which good Dr. *Watts* ſo well expreſſes in thoſe lines,

" Thy mercy never ſhall remove
From men of heart ſincere:
Thou fav'ſt the ſouls, whoſe humble love
Is join'd with holy fear."

14. Not that I would recommend a cold, dead, formal prayer, out of which both love and deſire, hope and fear are excluded. Such ſeems to have been " the calm and undiſturbed method of prayer," ſo ſtrongly recommended by the late Biſhop *Headly*, which occaſioned for ſome years

ſo violent a conteſt in the religious world. Is it not probable, that the well-meaning Biſhop had met with ſome of the Myſtics or Quietiſts, (ſuch as Madam *Guion*, or the Archbiſhop of *Cambray*) and that having no experience of theſe things, he patched together a theory of his own, as nearly reſembling theirs as he could? But it is certain, nothing is farther from apathy than real, ſcriptural devotion. It excites, exerciſes, and gives full ſcope to all our nobler paſſions; and excludes none but thoſe that are wild, irrational, and beneath the dignity of man.

15. But how then can we account for this, that ſo many holy men, men of truly elevated affections, not excepting pious *Kempis* himſelf, have ſo frequently uſed this manner of ſpeaking, theſe *fondling* kind of expreſſions? Since we cannot doubt but they are truly pious men? It is allowed they were; but we do not allow, that their judgment was equal to their piety. And hence it was that their really good affections a little exceeded the bounds of reaſon, and led them into a manner of ſpeaking, not authorized by the oracles of God. And ſurely theſe are the true ſtandard, both of our affections and our language. But did ever any of the holy men of old ſpeak thus, either in the Old or in the New Teſtament? Did *Daniel*, the *man greatly beloved*, ever thus expreſs himſelf to God? Or did "the diſciple whom Jeſus loved," and who doubtleſs loved his Maſter with the ſtrongeſt affection, leave us an example of addreſſing him thus? Even when he was on the verge of glory? Even then his concluding words were not *fond*, but ſolemn, *Come, Lord Jeſus!*

16. The

16. The ſum of all is, We are to "honour the Son even as we honour the Father." We are to pay Him the ſame worſhip as we pay to the Father. We are to love him with all our heart and ſoul: and to conſecrate all we have and are, all we think, ſpeak and do, to the Three-One *GOD*, Father, Son, and Spirit, world without end!

Plymouth-Dock,
Auguſt 15, 1789.

SERMON CXVIII.

The Single and The Evil Eye.

Matthew vi. 22, 23.

If thine eye be ſingle, thy whole body ſhall be full of light: but if thine eye be evil, thy whole body ſhall be full of darkneſs. Therefore if the light that is in thee be darkneſs, how great is that darkneſs!

1. "SIMPLICITY and purity, ſays a devout man, are the two wings that lift the ſoul up to heaven: ſimplicity, which is in the intention, and purity, which is in the affections." The former of theſe, that great and good man Biſhop *Taylor*, recommends with much earneſtneſs, in the beginning of his excellent book, "Rules of holy living and dying." He ſets out with inſiſting upon this, as the very firſt point in true religion, and warns us, that without this, all our endeavours after it, will be vain and ineffectual. The ſame truth, that ſtrong and elegant

gant writer, Mr. *Law*, earneſtly preſſes in his "Serious call to a devout life:" A treatiſe which will hardly be excelled, if it be equalled, in the *Engliſh* tongue, either for beauty of expreſſion, or for juſtneſs and depth of thought. And who can cenſure any follower of Chriſt, for laying ever ſo great ſtreſs on this point, that conſiders the manner wherein our Maſter recommends it, in the words above recited?

2. Let us attentively conſider this whole paſſage, as it may be literally tranſlated. "The eye is the lamp of the body." And what the eye is to the body, the intention is to the ſoul. We may obſerve, with what exact propriety our Lord places ſimplicity of intention, between worldly deſires, and worldly cares, either of which directly tend to deſtroy it. It follows, "If thine eye be ſingle," ſingly fixed upon God, "thy whole body," that is, all thy ſoul ſhall be filled with holineſs and happineſs. "But if thine eye be evil," not ſingle, aiming at any other object, ſeeking any thing beneath the ſun, "thy whole body ſhall be full of darkneſs: and if the light that is in thee be darkneſs, how great is that darkneſs?" How remote not only from all real knowledge, but from all real holineſs and happineſs?

3. Conſidering theſe things, we may well cry out, How great a thing is it to be a Chriſtian, to be a real, inward, ſcriptural Chriſtian! Conformed in heart and life to the will of God! Who is ſufficient for theſe things? None, unleſs he be born of God. I do not wonder, that one of the moſt ſenſible Deiſts ſhould ſay, "I think the Bible is the fineſt book I ever read in my life, yet I have an inſuperable objection to it. It is *too*

good. It lays down such a plan of life, such a scheme of doctrine and practice, as is far too excellent for weak silly men to aim at, or attempt to copy after." All this is most true, upon any other than the scriptural hypothesis. But this being allowed, all the difficulty vanishes into air. For, if "all things are possible with God, then all things are possible to him that believeth."

4. But let us consider, First, the former part of our Lord's declaration, "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light:" Secondly, the latter part, "If thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness:" and Thirdly, the dreadful state of those, whose eye is not single: "If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!"

I. 1. And first, "If thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light." If thine eye be single, if God is in all thy thoughts, if thou art constantly aiming at him that is invisible: if it be thy intention in all things, small and great, in all thy conversation to please God, to do not thy own will, but the will of him that sent thee into the world. If thou canst say, not to any creature, but to him that made thee for himself,

"I view thee,—Lord and end of my desires."

Then the promise will certainly take place, "Thy whole body shall be full of light:" thy whole soul shall be filled with the light of heaven, with the glory of the Lord resting upon thee. In all thy actions and conversation, thou shalt have not only the testimony of a good conscience toward God

God, but likewise of his Spirit bearing witness with thy spirit, that all thy ways are acceptable to him.

2. When thy whole soul is full of this light, thou wilt be able (according to St. *Paul's* directions to the *Thessalonians*,) to "rejoice evermore, to pray without ceasing, and in every thing to give thanks." For who can be constantly sensible of the loving presence of God, without *rejoicing evermore?* Who can have the loving eye of his soul, perpetually fixt upon God, but he will "pray without ceasing?" For his "heart is unto God without a voice, and his silence speaketh unto him." Who can be sensible, that this loving Father is well pleased with all he does and suffers, but he will be constrained "in every thing to give thanks," knowing that all things "work together for good."

3. Thus shall "his whole body be full of light." The light of knowledge is doubtless one thing here intended, arising from "the unction of the Holy One, which abideth with him, and teacheth him of all things," all the things which it is now necessary for him to know, in order to please God. Hereby he will have a clear knowledge of the divine will in every circumstance of life. Not without the means, but in the use of all those means, which God has furnished him with. And walking in this light, he cannot but grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will continually advance in all holiness, and in the whole image of God.

II. Our Lord observes, Secondly, "If thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness." If it be evil, that is, not single, (for the eye,

eye, which is not ſingle, is evil; "thy whole body ſhall be full of darkneſs." It is certain, there can be no medium, between a ſingle eye, and an evil eye. For, whenever we are not aiming at God, we are ſeeking happineſs in ſome creature. And this, whatever that creature may be, is no leſs than idolatry. It is all one, whether we aim at the pleaſures of ſenſe, the pleaſures of the imagination, the praiſe of men, or riches; all which, St. *John* comprifes under that general expreſſion, "the love of the world." The eye is evil, if we aim at any of theſe; or indeed at any thing under the ſun. So far as you aim at any of theſe, indeed, at any thing beneath God, your whole ſoul and the whole courſe of your life, will be full of darkneſs. Ignorance of yourſelves, ignorance of your real intereſt, ignorance of your relation to God, will ſurround you with impenetrable clouds, with darkneſs that may be felt. And ſo long as the eye of your ſoul reſts upon all, or any of theſe, thoſe will continue to ſurround your ſoul, and cover it with utter darkneſs.

2. With how many inſtances of this melancholy truth, that thoſe whoſe eye is not ſingle, are totally ignorant of the nature of true religion, are we ſurrounded on every ſide? How many even of good ſort of people, of them whoſe lives are innocent, are as ignorant of themſelves, of God, and of worſhipping him in ſpirit and in truth, as either *Mahometans* or *Heathens*. And yet they are not any way defective in natural underſtanding. And ſome of them have improved their natural abilities by a liberal education, whereby they have laid in a conſiderable ſtock of deep and various learning. Yet how totally ignorant

ignorant are they of God and of the things of God! How unacquainted both with the invisible and the eternal world! O why do they continue in this deplorable ignorance? It is the plain effect of this; their eye is not single. They do not aim at God: he is not in all their thoughts. They do not desire or think of heaven; therefore they sink deep as hell.

3. For this reason they are as far from holiness, as they are from valuable knowledge. It is because their eye is not single, that they are such strangers to vital religion. Let them be ever so accomplished in other respects, let them be ever so learned, ever so well versed in every branch of polite literature; yea, ever so courteous, so humane; yet if their eye is not singly fixt on God, they can know nothing of scriptural religion. They do not even know what Christian holiness means: what is the entrance of it, *the new birth*, with all the circumstances attending it: they know no more of this, than do the beasts of the field. Do they repent and believe the gospel? How much less are they renewed in the spirit of their minds, in the image of him that created them? As they have not the least experience of this, so they have not the least conception of it. Were you to name such a thing, you might expect to hear, "Much religion hath made thee mad:" so destitute are they, whatever accomplishments they have beside, of the only religion which avails with God.

4. And till their eye is single, they are as far remote from happiness as from holiness. They may now and then have agreeable dreams from

"Wealth, honour, pleasure, or what else
This short enduring world can give."

But

But none of these can satisfy the appetite of an immortal soul. Nay, all of them together cannot give rest, which is the lowest ingredient of happiness, to a never-dying spirit, which God created for the enjoyment of himself. The hungry soul, like the busy bee, wanders from flower to flower; but it goes off from each, with an abortive hope, and a deluded expectation. Every creature cries (some with a loud, and others with a secret voice,) "Happiness is not in *me*." The height and the depth, proclaim to an attentive ear, "The Creator hath not implanted in me a capacity of giving happiness: Therefore, with all thy skill and pains, thou canst not extract it from me." And indeed, the more pains any of the children of men take, to extract it from any earthly object, the greater will their chagrin be, the more secure their disappointment.

5. But although the vulgar herd of mankind can find no happiness; although it cannot be found in the empty pleasures of the world, may it not be found in learning, even by him that has not a single eye? Surely

"Content of spirit must from science flow;
For 'tis a god-like attribute to know."

By no means. On the contrary, it has been the observation of all ages, That the men who possessed the greatest learning, were the most dissatisfied of all men. This occasioned a person of eminent learning to declare, "A fool may find a kind of paradise upon earth, (although this is a grand mistake,) but a wise man can find none." These are the most discontented, the most impatient of men. Indeed learning naturally effects this: *Knowledge*, as the Apostle observes, *puffeth up*.

up. But where pride is, happineſs is not, they are utterly inconſiſtent with each other. So much ground there is for that melancholy reflection, wherever, true religion is not,

" Avails it then, O reaſon, to be wiſe?
To ſee this mournful ſight with quicker eyes?
To know with more diſtinction to complain,
And have ſuperior ſenſe in feeling pain?"

III. 1. It remains to conſider in the third place, our Lord's important queſtion, " If the light that is in thee be darkneſs, how great is that darkneſs? The plain meaning is, If that principle which ought to give light to thy whole ſoul, as the eye does to the body; to direct thy underſtanding, paſſions, affections, tempers, all thy thoughts, words, and actions: if this principle itſelf be darkened, be ſet wrong, and put darkneſs for light: How great muſt that darkneſs be; how terrible its effects!

2. In order to ſee this in a ſtronger point of view, let us conſider it in a few particular inſtances. Begin with one of no ſmall importance. Here is a father chuſing an employment for his ſon: If his eye be not ſingle, if he does not ſingly aim at the glory of God in the ſalvation of his ſoul: If it be not his one conſideration what calling is likely to ſecure him the higheſt place in heaven: Not the largeſt ſhare of earthly treaſure, or the higheſt preferment in the church; the light which is in him is manifeſtly darkneſs: And O how great is that darkneſs! The miſtake which he is in, is not a little one, but inexpreſſibly great. What! Do not you prefer his being a cobler on earth, and a glorious ſaint in heaven,

heaven, before his being a lord on earth, and a damned ſpirit in hell? If not, how great, unutterably great is the darkneſs that covers your ſoul! What a fool, what a dolt, what a madman is he, how ſtupid beyond all expreſſion, who judges a palace upon earth to be preferable to a throne in heaven? How unſpeakably is his underſtanding darkened, who, to gain for his child the honour that cometh of men, will intail upon him everlaſting ſhame in the company of the devil and his angels!

3. I cannot diſmiſs this ſubject yet, as it is of the utmoſt importance. How great is the darkneſs of that execrable wretch, (I can give him no better title, be he rich or poor,) who will ſell his own child to the devil? Who will barter her own eternal happineſs, for any quantity of gold or ſilver? What a monſter would any man be accounted, who devoured the fleſh of his own offſpring? And is not he as great a monſter, who by his own act and deed, gives her to be devoured by that roaring lion? As he certainly does, (ſo far as is in his power,) who marries her to an ungodly man. "But he is rich: But he has ten thouſand pounds!" What if it were a hundred thouſand? The more the worſe, the leſs probability will ſhe have of eſcaping the damnation of hell. With what face wilt thou look upon her, when ſhe tells thee in the realms below, "Thou haſt plunged me into this place of torment. Hadſt thou given me to a good man, however poor, I might have now been in Abraham's boſom. But O! what have riches profited me! They have ſunk both me and them into hell!"

4. Are

4. Are any of you that are called Methodists, thus merciful to your children? Seeking to *marry them well*, (as the *cant* phrase is,) that is, to sell them to some purchaser, that has much money, but little or no religion? Is then the light that is in *you* also darkness? Are ye too regarding God less than mammon? Are ye also without understanding? Have ye profited no more by all ye have heard? Man, woman, think what ye are about? Dare *you* also sell your child to the devil? You undoubtedly do this, (as far as in you lies,) when you marry a son or a daughter, to a child of the devil, though it be one that wallows in gold and silver. O take warning in time! Beware of the gilded bait! Death and hell are hid beneath. Prefer grace before gold and precious stones. Glory in heaven, to riches on earth! If you do not, you are worse than the very Canaanites. They only made their children pass *through the fire* to Moloch. You make yours *pass into the fire* that never shall be quenched, and to stay in it for ever! O how great is the darkness that causes you, after you have done this, to "wipe your mouth and say, you have done no evil!"

5. Let us consider another case, not far distant from this. Suppose a young man, having finished his studies at the University, is desirous to minister in holy things, and accordingly enters into orders: What is his intention in this? What is the end he proposes to himself? If his eye be single, his one design is, to save his own soul, and them that hear him: To bring as many sinners as he possibly can, out of the paths into marvellous light. If on the other hand, his eye be not single, if he aims at ease, honour, money,

or preferment, the world may account him a wise man; but God says unto him, "Thou fool!" And while the light which is in him is thus darkness, *how great is that darkness!* What folly is comparable to his folly! One peculiarly dedicated to the God of heaven, to *mind earthly things!* A worldly clergyman is a fool above all fools, a madman above all madmen! Such vile, infamous wretches as these, are the real "ground of the contempt of the clergy." Indolent clergymen, pleasure-taking clergymen, money-loving clergymen, praise-loving clergymen, preferment-seeking clergymen; these are the wretches that cause the order in general to be contemned. These are the pests of the Christian world, the grand nuisance of mankind, a stink in the nostrils of God. Such as these were they, who made St. Chrysostom to say, "Hell is paved with the souls of Christian priests."

6. Take another case: Suppose a young woman of an independent fortune, to be addressed at the same time by a man of wealth, without religion, and a man of religion, without wealth; in other words, by a rich child of the devil, or a poor child of God: What shall we say, if, other circumstances being equal, she prefers the rich man to the good man? It is plain, her eye is not single; therefore her foolish heart is darkened, and how great is that darkness, which makes her judge gold and silver a greater recommendation than holiness? Which makes a child of the devil, with money, appear more amiable to her, than a child of God without it? What words can sufficiently express the inexcusable folly of such a choice? What a laughing-stock, (unless she severely repent,) will she be to

all

all the devils in hell, when her wealthy companion has dragged her down to his own place of torment?

6. Are there any of you that are present before God, who are concerned in any of these matters? Give me leave with "great plainness of speech, to apply to your consciences in the sight of God." You whom God has intrusted with sons or daughters, is your eye single in chusing partners for them? What qualifications do you seek in your sons and daughters in law? Religion or riches? Which is your first consideration? Are you not of the old Heathen's mind,

Quærenda pecunia primum,
Virtus post nummos?

"Seek money first: Let virtue then be sought."

Bring the matter to a point. Which will you prefer? A rich Heathen, or a pious Christian? A child of the devil with an estate? Or the child of God without it? A lord or gentleman, with the devil in his heart? (He does not hide it: His speech bewrayeth him.) Or a tradesman, who, you have reason to believe, has Christ dwelling in his heart? O how great is that darkness which makes you prefer a child of the devil to a child of God? Which causes you to prefer the poor trash of worldly wealth, which flies as a shadow, to the riches of eternal glory!

8. I call upon you more especially, who are called *Methodists*. In the sight of the great God, upwards of fifty years I have administered unto you, I have been your servant for Christ's sake. During this time I have given you many solemn warnings on this head. I now give you one

more, perhaps the laſt. Dare any of you, in chuſing your calling or ſituation, eye the things on earth, rather than the things above? In chuſing a profeſſion, or a companion for life, for your child, do you look at earth or heaven? And can you deliberately prefer, either for yourſelf or or your offspring, a child of the devil with money, to a child of God without it? Why the very Heathens cry out,

O curvæ in terras animæ, & celeſtium inanes!

O ſouls bowed down to earth, ſtrangers to heaven.

Repent, repent of your vile earthly-mindedneſs! Renounce the title of Chriſtians, or prefer, both in your own caſe, and the caſe of your children, grace to money, and heaven to earth. For the time to come, at leaſt, "let your eye be ſingle, *that your* whole body may be full of light!"

Briſtol,
Sept. 25, 1789.

SERMON

SERMON CXIX.

THE RICH FOOL.

LUKE xii. 20.

But GOD said unto him, Thou fool!

1. BUT one of these fools is commonly wiser in his own eyes than seven men that can render a reason. If it were possible for a Christian, for one that has the mind which was in Christ, to despise any one, he would cordially despise those, who suppose *they are the men*, and wisdom shall die with them! You may see one of these painted to the life, in the verses preceding the text. "The ground of a certain rich man, (says our blessed Lord,) brought forth plenteously," ver. 17. &c. "And he reasoned within himself, saying, What shall I do? for I have no room where to bestow my fruits. And he said, This will I do, I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there will I bestow all my goods and my fruits. And I will say to

my ſoul, "Soul thou haſt much goods laid up for many years: Take thy eaſe; eat, drink, and be merry;" but God ſaid unto him, Thou fool!"

2. I propoſe, by the aſſiſtance of God, firſt, to open and explain theſe few full words, and then to apply them to your conſcience. Firſt, to open and explain them. A little before, our Lord had been giving a ſolemn caution to one who ſpoke to him about "dividing his inheritance. Beware of covetouſneſs: For the life of a man," that is, the happineſs of it, "does not conſiſt in the abundance of the things that he poſſeſſeth." To prove and illuſtrate this weighty truth, our Lord relates this remarkable ſtory. It is not improbable, it was one that had lately occured, and that was freſh in the memory of ſome that were preſent. "The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plenteouſly." The riches of the ancients conſiſted chiefly in the fruits of the earth. "And he ſaid within himſelf, What ſhall I do?" The very language of want and diſtreſs! The voice of one that is affected and groaning under his burden: What ſhalt thou do? Why, are not thoſe at the door, whom God hath appointed to receive what thou canſt ſpare? What ſhalt thou do? Why *diſperſe* abroad and give to the poor. Feed the hungry. Clothe the naked. Be a father to the fatherleſs, and a huſband to the widow. Freely thou haſt received, freely give. O no! He is wiſer than this comes to: He knows better than ſo. "And he ſaid, This will I do,"—without aſking God's leave, or thinking about him any more than if there were no God in heaven or on earth,—"I will pull down my barns and build greater,

greater, and there will I beſtow all my goods and all my fruits." *My* fruits! They are as much thine as the clouds that fly over thy head! As much as the winds that blow around thee; which doubtleſs thou canſt hold in thy fiſts!—"And I will ſay to my ſoul, Soul, thou haſt much goods!" Are then corn, and wine, and oil, the goods of an immortal ſpirit? "Laid up for many years." Who told thee ſo? Believe him not, he was a liar from the beginning. He could not prolong thy life, if he would. God alone is the giver of life and death. And he would not if he could, but would immediately drag thee to his own ſad abode. "Soul, take thy eaſe, eat, drink, and be merry!" How replete with folly and madneſs is every part of this wonderful ſoliloquy! "Eat and drink!" Will thy ſpirit then eat and drink? Yea, but not of earthly food! Thou wilt ſoon eat livid flame, and drink of the lake of fire burning with brimſtone. But wilt thou then drink and be merry? Nay, there will be no mirth in thoſe horrid ſhades. Thoſe caverns will reſound with no muſic, but weeping, and wailing, and gnaſhing of teeth.

3. But while he was applauding his own wiſdom, "God ſaid unto him, Thou fool! This night ſhall thy ſoul be required of thee. And then whoſe ſhall thoſe things be, which thou haſt prepared?"

4. Let us conſider his words a little more attentively. He ſaid within himſelf, "What ſhall I do?" And is not the anſwer ready! Do good. Do all the good thou canſt. Let thy plenty ſupply thy neighbours' wants, and thou wilt never want ſomething to do. Canſt thou find none that

that need the neceſſaries of life? That are pinched with cold or hunger? None that have not raiment to put on? Or a place where to lay their head? None that are waſted with pining ſickneſs? None that are languiſhing in priſon? If you duly conſidered our Lord's words, "The poor have you always with you," you would no more aſk, "What ſhall I do?"

5. How different was the purpoſe of this poor madman? "I will pull down my barns and build greater, and there will I beſtow all my goods." You may juſt as well bury them in the earth, or caſt them into the ſea. This will juſt as well anſwer the end, for which God intruſted thee with them.

6. But let us examine a little further, the remaining part of his reſolution. "I will ſay to my ſoul, Soul, thou haſt much goods laid up for many years, take thy eaſe, eat, drink and be merry." What are theſe the goods of a never-dying ſpirit? As well may the body feed on the fleeting breezes, as thy ſoul on earthly fruits. Excellent counſel then to ſuch a ſpirit, to eat and drink, to a ſpirit made equal to angels, made an incorruptible picture of the glory of God, to feed not on corruptible things, but on the fruit of the tree of life, which grows in the midſt of the paradiſe of God.

7. It is no marvel then, that God ſhould ſay unto him, "Thou fool!" For this terrible reaſon, were there no other. "This night ſhall thy ſoul be required of thee!"

"And art thou born to die,
To lay this body down?
And muſt thy trembling ſpirit fly
Into a land unknown?

A land

A land of deepeſt ſhade,
Unpierc'd by human thought;
The dreary regions of the dead,
Where all things are forgot?"

"And whoſe then ſhall all the things be which thou haſt provided?"

II. 1. The ſecond thing which I propoſed was, to apply theſe conſiderations, which it is certain, are ſome of the moſt important, that can enter into the heart of man. In one ſenſe, indeed, they have been applied already, for what has been ſaid, has been all application. But I wiſh every one who reads or hears theſe words, directly to apply them to his own ſoul.

2. Does it not concern every one that hears,—"The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully," to enquire, Was this ever the caſe with *me?* Have I now, or have I ever heretofore, had more worldly goods given than I wanted? And what were my thoughts upon the occaſion? Did I ſay in my heart, What ſhall I do? Was I diſtreſt by my abundance? Did I think, "I have much goods laid up for many years?" Many years! Alas! What is thy life, if protracted to the utmoſt ſpan? Is it not a vapour, that juſt appeareth, and vaniſheth away: Say not then, *I* will pull down my barns; but ſay to God in the ſecret of thy heart, "Lord, ſave, or I periſh." See, my riches increaſe: let me not ſet my heart upon them. Thou ſeeſt I ſtand upon ſlippery ground, do thou undertake for me;

"Uphold me, Saviour, or I fall!
O reach me forth thy gracious hand;

Only

Only for help on thee I call!
Only by faith in thee I ſtand!"

See, Lord, how greatly my ſubſtance increaſe! Nothing leſs than thy almighty power can prevent my ſetting my heart upon it, and of being cruſhed lower than the grave!

3. I aſk thee, O Lord, "What ſhall I do?" Firſt of all, endeavour to be deeply ſenſible of thy danger, and make it matter of earneſt and conſtant prayer, that thou mayeſt never loſe that ſenſe of it. Pray that thou mayeſt always feel thyſelf ſtanding on the brink of a precipice. Mean time let the language of thy heart be, "Having more means, I will do more good, by the grace of God than ever I did before. All the additional goods, which it hath pleaſed God to put into my hands, I am reſolved to lay out with all diligence, in additional works of mercy. And hereby I ſhall "lay up for myſelf a ſure foundation, that I may attain eternal life."

4. Thou no longer talkeſt of *thy* goods or *thy* fruits, knowing they are not thine, but God's. The earth is the Lord's, and the fulneſs thereof: he is the proprietor of heaven and earth. He cannot diveſt himſelf of his glory: he muſt be the Lord, the poſſeſſor of all that is. Only he hath left a portion of his goods in thy hands, for ſuch uſes as he has ſpecified. How long he will be pleaſed to lodge them with thee, thou doſt not yet know: perhaps only till to-morrow, or to night. Therefore talk not, think not of many years. Knoweſt thou not, that thou art a creature of a day, that is cruſhed before the moth? That the breath which is in thy noſtrils may be taken away at a moment's warning? That

That it may be resumed by him that gave it, at a time thou thinkest not of it? How knowest thou, but the next time thou liest down on thy bed thou mayest hear, "This night shall thy soul be required of thee."

5. Is not thy life as unstable as a cloud? Fluctuating as a bubble on the water? It fleeth as it were a shadow, and never continueth in one stay. "Many years!" Who is sure of one day? And is it not an instance both of the wisdom and goodness of God, that he holds thy breath in his own hand, and deals it out from moment to moment, that thou mayest always remember, to "Live each day, as if it were the last." And after the few days thou shalt have spent under the sun, how soon will it be said,

"A heap of dust is all remains of thee,
'Tis all thou art, and all the proud shall be."

6. Consider again, the exquisite folly of that saying, "Soul, Thou hast much goods." Are then the products of the earth, food for a heaven-born spirit? Is there any composition of earth and water, yea, though air and fire be added thereto, which can feed those beings of a higher order? What similitude is there between those ethereal spirits, and these base-born clods of earth? Examine the rest of this wise soliloquy, and see how it will apply to yourself? "Soul, take thy ease!" O vain hope! Can ease to a spirit spring out of the ground? Suppose the soil were ever so improved, can it yield such a harvest? "Eat, drink and be merry!" What! can thy soul eat and drink,

"Manna such as angels eat,
Pure delights for spirits fit?"

But

But these do not grow on earthly ground: they are only found in the paradise of God.

7. But, suppose the voice which commands life and death, pronounce, "This night thy soul shall be required of thee; then whose are all those things thou hast provided?" Alas! They are not thine! Thou hast no longer any part or lot in any of the things that are under the sun. Thou hast then no more share in any of these things of earth, than if the earth and the works of it were burnt up. Naked thou camest out of thy mother's womb, and naked shalt thou return. Thou hast heaped up many things; but for what end? To leave them all behind thee! Poor shade! Thou art now stript of all! Not even hope is left.

8. Observe the remark, which our Lord has left upon the whole occurrence. "*So is* every one who layeth up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God?" Such a fool, such an eggregious madman, is beyond the power of language to express! However wise he may be in his own eyes, and perhaps in those of his neighbour, he is in reality the greatest fool under heaven, who heapeth up things, from which he must soon be separated for ever: and whoever is seeking happiness in the things that perish, is *laying* up treasure for himself. This is absolutely inconsistent with *being rich* (or rather, *growing* toward God) with obeying that scriptural command, "My son, give me thy heart." He, who is a child of God, can truly say,

> "All my riches are above!
> All my treasure is thy love."

He can testify, "All my desire is unto thee, and to the remembrance of thy name."

9. Let

9. Let every one who readeth theſe words, narrowly ſearch his own heart. Where haſt thou laid up thy treaſure hitherto? Where art thou laying it up now? Art thou labouring to be rich toward God? Or to lay up earthly goods? Which takes up the greater part of thy thoughts? Thou that art careful for outward things, diligent in doing good, and exact in outward duties, beware of covetouſneſs, of decent honourable love of money, and of a deſire to lay up treaſures on earth. Lay up treaſures in heaven! A few days hence, thou wilt ſtep into a land of darkneſs, where earthly fruits will be of no avail, where thou will not be capable of eating and drinking or gratifying any of thy ſenſes: what benefit wilt thou then receive from all thou haſt laid up in this world? What ſatisfaction in all which thou haſt treaſured up, all thou haſt left behind thee? Left behind thee! What! Could'ſt thou then take nothing with thee into the everlaſting habitations? Nay then, lay up treaſure before thou go hence, which fadeth not away!

Balam, Feb. 19, 1790.

SERMON CXX.

THE WEDDING GARMENT.

MATTHEW xxii. 12.

How cameſt thou in hither not having a wedding garment?

1. IN the verſes preceding the text we read, "After theſe things, Jeſus ſpake to them again in parables, and ſaid, A certain king made a ſupper for his ſon. And when the king came in to ſee the gueſts, he ſaw one who had not on a wedding garment. And he ſaith unto him, Friend, how cameſt thou in hither, not having a wedding garment? And he was ſpeechleſs. Then ſaid the king to the ſervants; Bind him hand and foot and caſt him into outer darkneſs; there ſhall be weeping and gnaſhing of teeth."

2. Upon this parable one of our moſt celebrated Expoſitors comments in the following manner. "The deſign of this parable is to ſet forth

forth that gracious ſupply made by God to men in and by the preaching of the Goſpel. To invite them to this, God ſent forth his ſervants, the Prophets and Apoſtles"—And on theſe words, "Why cameſt thou in hither, not having a wedding garment," he proceeds thus; "The puniſhment of which ought not to diſcourage us, or make us to turn our backs upon the holy ordinances." Certainly it ought not; but nothing of this kind can be inferred from this parable, which has no reference to the Ordinances, any more than to Baptiſm and Marriage. And probably we ſhould never have imagined it, but that the word *ſupper* occured therein.

3. However moſt of the *Engliſh* Annotators have fallen into the ſame miſtake with Mr. *Burkitt*. And ſo have thouſands of their readers. Yet a miſtake it certainly is. And ſuch a miſtake, as has not any ſhadow of foundation in the text. It is true, indeed, that none ought to approach the Lord's table without habitual, (at leaſt, if not actual) preparation: that is, a firm purpoſe, to keep all the commandments of God, and a ſincere deſire to receive all his promiſes. But that obligation cannot be inferred from this text, though it may from many other paſſages of ſcripture. But there is no need of multiplying texts: one is as good as a thouſand: there needs no more to induce any man of a tender conſcience to communicate at all opportunities, than that ſingle commandment of our Lord, "Do this in remembrance of me."

4. But, whatever preparation is neceſſary in order to our being worthy partakers of the Lord's

Supper, it has no relation at all to the wedding garment mentioned in this parable. It cannot: for, that commemoration of his death was not then ordained. It relates wholly to the proceedings of our Lord, when he comes in the clouds of heaven, to judge the quick and the dead; and to the qualifications which will then be neceſſary, to their "inheriting the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world."

5. Many excellent men, who are thoroughly apprized of this, who are convinced the wedding garment here mentioned, is not to be underſtood of any qualification for the Lord's Supper, but of the qualification for glory, interpret it of the righteouſneſs of Chriſt, which (ſay they) is "The ſole qualification for heaven: this being the only righteouſneſs, wherein any man can ſtand in the day of the Lord." For who, they aſk, will then dare to appear before the great God, ſave in the righteouſneſs of his well beloved Son? "Shall we not then at leaſt, if not before, find the need of having a better righteouſneſs than our own! And what other can that be, than the righteouſneſs of God our Saviour?" The late pious and ingenious Mr. *Hervey* deſcants largely upon this: particularly in his elaborate Dialogues between *Theron* and *Aſpaſio*.

6. Another elegant writer, now I truſt with God, ſpeaks ſtrongly to the ſame effect, in the preface to his comment on St. *Paul's* Epiſtle to the *Romans*. "We certainly, ſays he, ſhall need a better righteouſneſs than our own, wherein to ſtand at the bar of God in the day of judgment." I do not underſtand the expreſſion. Is

Is it Scriptural? Do we read it in the Bible? Either in the Old Teſtament or the New? I doubt, it is an unſcriptural, awkward phraſe, which has no determinate meaning. If you mean by that odd, uncouth queſtion, "In whoſe righteouſneſs are you to ſtand at the laſt day?" —For *whoſe ſake*, or *by whoſe merit* do you expect to enter into the glory of God? I anſwer, without the leaſt heſitation, for the ſake of Jeſus Chriſt, the righteous. It is through his merits alone that all believers are ſaved, that is, *juſtified*, ſaved from the guilt, *ſanctified*, ſaved from the nature of ſin, and *glorified*, taken into heaven.

7. It may be worth our while, to ſpend a few more words on this important point. *Is it* poſſible to deviſe a more unintelligible expreſſion than this,—"In what righteouneſs are we to ſtand before God at the laſt day?" Why do you not ſpeak plain, and ſay, "*For whoſe ſake* do you look to be ſaved?" Any plain peaſant would then readily anſwer, "For the ſake of Jeſus Chriſt." But all thoſe dark, ambiguous phraſes tend only to puzzle the cauſe, and open a way for unwary hearers to ſlide into Antinomianiſm.

8. Is there any expreſſion ſimilar to this of the wedding garment to be found in Holy Scripture? In the Revelation we find mention made of "linen white and clean, which is the righteouſneſs of the ſaints." And this too many vehemently contend, means the righteouſneſs of Chriſt. But how then are we to reconcile this with that paſſage in the ſeventh chapter, "They have waſhed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Will they ſay,

"The righteouneſs of Chriſt was waſhed and made white, in the blood of Chriſt?" Away with ſuch Antinomian jargon. Is not the plain meaning this? It was from the atoning blood, that the very righteouſneſs of the ſaints derived its value and acceptableneſs with God.

9. In the nineteenth chapter of the *Revelation*, at the ninth verſe, there is an expreſſion, which comes much nearer to this: "The wedding-ſupper of the Lamb." There is a near reſemblance between this, and the Supper mentioned in the parable. Yet they are not altogether the ſame; there is a clear difference between them. The Supper mentioned in the parable belongs to the Church Militant. That mentioned in the *Revelation*, to the Church Triumphant. The one to the kingdom of God on earth; the other, to the kingdom of God in heaven. Accordingly in the former there may be found thoſe, who have not a *wedding garment*. But there will be none ſuch to be found in the latter. No, not "in that great multitude, which no man can number, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation. They will all be kings and prieſts unto God, and ſhall reign with him for ever and ever."

10. Does not that expreſſion, "The righte-ouſneſs of the ſaints," point out, what is the wedding garment in the parable? It is the "Holineſs, without which no man can ſee the Lord." The righteouſneſs of Chriſt is, doubtleſs, neceſſary for any ſoul that enters into glory. But ſo is perſonal holineſs too for every child of man. But it is highly needful to be obſerved, that they are neceſſary in different reſpects. The former is neceſſary to *intitle* us to heaven: the latter, to *qualify* us for it. Without the righteouſneſs

teoulneſs of Chriſt we could have no *claim* to glory; without holineſs, we could have no *fitneſs* for it. By the former we become members of Chriſt, children of God, and heirs of the kingdom of heaven. By the latter, "we are made meet to be partakers of the inheritance of the ſaints in light."

11. From the very time that the Son of God delivered this weighty truth to the children of men, That all who had not the wedding garment would be caſt into outward darkneſs, where are weeping and gnaſhing of teeth, the enemy of ſouls has been labouring to obſcure it, that they might ſtill ſeek death in the error of their life: and many ways has he tried to diſguiſe the Holineſs, without which we cannot be ſaved. How many things have been palmed, even upon the chriſtian world, in the place of this! Some of theſe are utterly contrary thereto, and ſubverſive of it. Some were no ways connected with or related to it, but uſeleſs and inſignificant trifles. Others might be deemed to be ſome part of it, but by no means the whole. It may be of uſe to enumerate ſome of them, leſt ye ſhould be ignorant of ſatan's devices.

12. Of the firſt ſort, things preſcribed as Chriſtian Holineſs, although flatly contrary thereto, is Idolatry: How has this, in various ſhapes, been taught, and is to this day, as eſſential to Holineſs? How diligently is it now circulated, in a great part of the Chriſtian Church? Some of their idols are ſilver and gold, or wood and ſtone, *graven by art of man's device:* ſome, men of like paſſions with themſelves; particularly the Apoſtles of our Lord, and the Virgin Mary. To theſe they add numberleſs ſaints of their

their own creation, with no small company of angels.

13 Another thing as directly contrary to the whole tenor of true religion, is, what is diligently taught in many parts of the Christian Church: I mean, the Spirit of Persecution: of persecuting their brethren even unto death. So that the earth has been often covered with blood by those who were called Christians, in order to "make their calling and election sure." It is true, many even in the Church of *Rome*, who were taught this horrid doctrine, now seem to be ashamed of it. But have the heads of that community as openly and explicitly renounced that capital doctrine of devils, as they avowed it in the Council of *Constance*, and practised it for many ages? Till they have done this, they will be chargeable with the blood of *Jerome* of *Prague*, basely murdered, and of many thousands, both in the sight of God and man.

14. Let it not be said, This does not concern us Protestants: we think and let think. We abhor the spirit of persecution, and maintain as an indisputable truth, that every rational creature has a right to worship God, as he is persuaded in his own mind. But are we true to our *own* principles? So far, that we do not use fire and faggot. We do not persecute unto blood, those that do not subscribe to our opinions. Blessed be God, the laws of our country do not allow of this: but is there no such thing to be found in *England*, as Domestic Persecution? The saying or doing any thing unkind to another for following his own conscience, is a species of persecution.

perſecution. Now are we all clear of this? Is there no huſband, who in this ſenſe perſecutes his wife? Who uſes her unkindly in word or deed, for worſhipping God after her own conſcience? Do no parents thus perſecute their children: no maſters or miſtreſſes their ſervants? If they do this, and think they do God ſervice therein, they muſt not caſt the firſt ſtone at the *Roman Catholics*.

15. When things of an *indifferent nature* are repreſented as neceſſary to ſalvation, it is a folly of the ſame kind, though not of the ſame magnitude. Indeed it is not a little ſin, to repreſent trifles as neceſſary to ſalvation: ſuch as going of pilgrimages, or any thing that is not expreſsly enjoined in the holy Scripture. Among theſe we may undoubtedly rank *Orthodoxy*, or right opinions. We know indeed that wrong opinions in religion naturally lead to wrong tempers or wrong practices; and that conſequently it is our bounden duty to pray, that we may have a right judgment in all things. But ſtill a man may judge as accurately as the devil, and yet be as wicked as he.

16. Something more excuſable are they, who imagine Holineſs to conſiſt in things that are only a part of it. (That is, when they are connected with the reſt; otherwiſe they are no part of it at all:) Suppoſe in doing no harm. And how exceeding common is this? How many take Holineſs and Harmleſſneſs to mean one and the ſame thing? Whereas were a man as harmleſs as a poſt, he might be as far from Holineſs, as heaven from earth. Suppoſe a man therefore to be exactly honeſt, to pay every one his own, to cheat no man, to wrong no man, to hurt no man,

man, to be juſt in all his dealings: ſuppoſe a woman to be uniformly modeſt and virtuous in all her words and actions: ſuppoſe the one and the other, to be ſteady practiſers of Morality, that is, of Juſtice, Mercy, and Truth: yet all this, though it is good, as far as it goes, is but a part of Chriſtian Holineſs. Yea, ſuppoſe a perſon of this amiable character to do much good, wherever he is, to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, relieve the ſtranger, the ſick, the priſoner, yea, and to ſave many ſouls from death: it is poſſible he may ſtill fall far ſhort of that holineſs, without which he cannot ſee the Lord.

17. What then is that Holineſs, which is the true Wedding Garment, the only qualification for glory? *In Chriſt Jeſus* (that is according to the Chriſtian Inſtitution) whatever be the caſe of the heathen world, "neither circumciſion availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion, but a new creation," the renewal of the ſoul "in the image of God wherein it was created." In "Chriſt Jeſus neither circumciſion availeth any thing, nor uncircumciſion, but faith which worketh by love." It firſt, through the energy of God, worketh love to God and all mankind; and by this love, every holy and heavenly temper. In particular, lowlineſs, meekneſs, gentleneſs, temperance, and long-ſuffering. "It is neither circumciſion," the attending on all the Chriſtian ordinances, "nor uncircumciſion," the fulfilling of all heathen morality, but "the keeping the commandments of God;" particularly thoſe, "Thou ſhalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy neighbour as thyſelf." In a word, Holineſs is, the having "the

"the mind that was in Chriſt," and the "walking as Chriſt walked."

18. Such has been my judgment for theſe threeſcore years, without any material alteration. Only about fifty years ago, I had a clearer view than before, of Juſtification by Faith: and in this, from that very hour I never varied, no not an hair's breadth. Nevertheleſs an ingenious man has publicly accuſed me of a thouſand variations. I pray God, not to lay this to his charge! I am now on the borders of the grave, but by the grace of God, I ſtill witneſs the ſame confeſſion. Indeed ſome have ſuppoſed, that when I began to declare, "By grace ye are ſaved, through faith," I retracted what I had before maintained, "Without holineſs no man ſhall ſee the Lord." But it is an entire miſtake: theſe Scriptures well conſiſt with each other: the meaning of the former being plainly this, By faith we are ſaved from ſin, and made holy. The imagination that Faith *ſupercedes* Holineſs, is the marrow of Antinomianiſm.

19. The ſum of all is this, The God of love is willing to ſave all the ſouls that he has made. This he has proclaimed to them in his word, together with the terms of ſalvation, revealed by the Son of his love, who gave his own life, that they that believe in him might have everlaſting life. And for theſe he has prepared a kingdom, from the foundation of the world. But he will not force them to accept of it: He leaves them in the hands of their own counſel: He ſaith, "Behold I ſet before you, life and death; bleſſing and curſing; chuſe life, that ye may live." Chuſe Holineſs by my grace, which is

is the way, the only way to everlasting life. He cries aloud, Be holy, and be happy; happy in this world, and happy in the world to come. "Holiness becometh his house for ever!" This is the Wedding Garment of all that are called to "the Marriage of the Lamb:" clothed in this, they will not be found naked: "They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." But as to all those who appear in the last day without the Wedding Garment, the Judge will say, "Cast them into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

Madeley, March 26, 1790.

SERMON

SERMON CXXI.

THE DREAM OF LIFE.

PSALM lxxii. 20.

Even like as a dream when one awaketh, ſo ſhalt thou make their image to vaniſh out of the city.

1. ANY one that conſiders the foregoing verſes, will eaſily obſerve, that the Pſalmiſt is ſpeaking directly of the wicked, that proſper in their wickedneſs. It is very common for theſe, utterly to forget that they are creatures of a day: to live as if they were never to die; as if their preſent ſtate was to endure for ever: or at leaſt, as if they were indiſputably ſure, that they "had much goods laid up for many years:" ſo that they might ſafely ſay, "Soul, take thine eaſe; eat, drink, and be merry." But how miſerable a miſtake is this! How often does God ſay to ſuch a one, "Thou fool! this night ſhall thy ſoul be required of thee!" Well then may it be ſaid of them, "O, how ſuddenly do they con-

ſumes,—periſh and come to a fearful end! Yea, even like as a dream when one awaketh, ſo ſhalt thou make their image to vaniſh out of the city."

2. But I would at preſent carry this thought farther: I would conſider it in a general ſenſe, and ſhow how near a reſemblance there is, between human life and a dream. An ancient Poet carries the compariſon farther ſtill, when he ſtiles life "the dream of a ſhadow." And ſo does *Cowley*, when he cries out,

"O Life, thou Nothing's younger brother,
So like, that we miſtake the one for th' other."

But letting theſe and all other flights of poetry aſide, I would ſeriouſly enquire, wherein this reſemblance lies, wherein the analogy between the one and the other does properly conſiſt.

3. In order to this, I would enquire firſt, What is a dream? You will ſay, "Who does not know this?" Might you not rather ſay, Who *does* know? Is there any thing more myſterious in nature? Who is there that has not experienced it, that has not dreamed a thouſand times? Yet he is no more able to *explain* the nature of it, than he is to graſp the ſkies. Who can give any clear, ſatisfactory account of the parent of dreams, Sleep? It is true, many phyſicians have attempted this: but they have attempted it in vain. They have talked learnedly about it; but have left the matter at laſt juſt as dark as it was before. They tell us ſome of its properties and effects. But none can tell, what is the *Eſſence* of it.

4. However, we know the origin of dreams, and that with ſome degree of certainty. There can be no doubt, but ſome of them ariſe from the preſent conſtitution of the body, while others of

of them are probably occafioned by the paffions of the mind. Again, we are clearly informed in Scripture, that fome are caufed by the operation of good angels: as others undoubtedly are owing to the power and malice of evil angels. (If we may dare to fuppofe, that there are any fuch now, or at leaft that they have any thing to do in the world!) From the fame divine treafury of knowledge we learn, that on fome extraordinary occafions, the Great Father of Spirits has manifefted himfelf to human fpirits, "in dreams and vifions of the night." But which of all thefe arife from natural, which from fupernatural influence, we are many times not able to determine.

5. And how can we certainly diftinguifh between our dreams and our waking thoughts? What criterion is there by which we may furely know, whether we are awake or afleep? It is true, as foon as we awake out of fleep, we know we have been in a dream and are now awake. But how fhall we know that a dream is fuch, while we continue therein? What is a Dream? To give a grofs and fuperficial, not a philofophical account of it? It is a feries of perfons and things prefented to our mind in fleep, which have no being but in our own imagination. A dream therefore is a kind of digreffion from our real life. It feems to be an Echo, of what was faid or done when we were awake. Or, may we fay, a dream is a fragment of life, broken off at both ends, not connected, either with the part that goes before, or with that which follows after? And is there any better way of diftinguifhing our dreams from our waking thoughts, than by this very circumftance? It is a kind of parenthefis, inferted in life, as that is in a difcourfe which goes

on equally well either with it, or without it. By this then we may infallibly know a dream, by its being broken off at both ends; by its having no proper connexion with the real things, which either precede or follow it.

6. It is not needful to *prove*, that there is a near reſemblance between theſe tranſient dreams, and the dream of life. It may be of more uſe, to *illuſtrate* this important truth, to place it in as ſtriking a light as poſſible. Let us then ſeriouſly conſider, in a few obvious particulars, the caſe of one that is juſt awakening out of life, and opening his eyes in eternity.

7. Let us then propoſe the caſe. Let us ſuppoſe we had now before us, one, that was juſt paſſed into the world of Spirits. Might not you addreſs ſuch a new-born ſoul in ſome ſuch manner as this? You have been an inhabitant of earth, forty, perhaps fifty or ſixty years. But now God has uttered his voice, "Awake thou that ſleepeſt!" You awake, you ariſe: you have no more to do with theſe poor, tranſient ſhadows. Ariſe and ſhake thyſelf from the duſt! See, all is *real* here! All is permanent, all eternal! Far more ſtable than the foundations of the earth; yea, than the pillars of that lower heaven. Now that your eyes are open, ſee how inexpreſſibly different are all the things that are now round about you! What a difference do you perceive in yourſelf? Where is your body? Your houſe of clay? Where are your limbs? Your hands, your feet, your head? There they lie; cold, inſenſible!

"No anger, hereafter, or ſhame
Shall redden the innocent clay;
Extinct is the animal flame,
And paſſion is vaniſh'd away!"

What

What a change is in the immortal Spirit! You see every thing around you: but how? Not with eyes of flesh and blood! You hear: but not by a stream of undulating air, striking on an extended membrane. You feel; but in how wonderful a manner! You have no nerves to convey the ethereal fire to the common sensory; rather are you not now all eye, all ear, all feeling, all perception? How different, now you are thoroughly awake, are all the objects round about you? Where are the houses, and gardens, and fields, and cities, Where are the rivers and seas, and everlasting hills? Was it then only in a dream that our Poet discovered

> "Earth hath this variety from Heaven
> Of pleasure situate in hill and dale?"

Nay, I doubt all these vanished away like smoke, the moment you awoke out of the body.

8. How strange must not only the manner of existence appear, and the place wherein you are, if it may be called *Place*, though who can define, or describe the *Place of Spirits*, but the inhabitants of that unknown region? Whether they are of the number of those unhappy spirits, that kept not their first estate, or of those holy ones, that still minister to the heirs of salvation? How strange are the employments of those Spirits, with which you are now surrounded? How bitter are they to the taste of those that are still dreaming upon earth? "I have no relish, (said one of these, a much-applauded Wit, who has lately left the body,) for sitting upon a cloud all day long, and singing praise to God." We may easily believe him; and there is no danger of his being put to that trouble. Nevertheless this is no trouble to them who cease not day and night, but con-

continually ſing, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth!"

9. Suppoſe this to be the caſe with any of you, that are now preſent before God. It may be ſo to-morrow: perhaps to-night: perhaps this night your "ſoul may be required of you." The dream of life may end, and *you* may wake into broad eternity. See, there lies the poor inanimate carcaſe, ſhortly to be ſown in corruption and diſhonour. But, where is the immortal, incorruptible ſpirit? There it ſtands naked before the eyes of God! Mean time, what is become of all the affairs which you have been eagerly engaged in, under the ſun! what profit have you reaped of all your labour and care? Does your money follow you? No, you have left it behind you; the ſame thing to you as if it had vaniſhed into air! Does your gay or rich apparel follow you? Your body is clothed with duſt and rottenneſs. Your ſoul indeed is clothed with immortality. But O! What immortality? Is it an immortality of happineſs and glory? Or of ſhame and everlaſting contempt? Where is the honour, the pomp of the rich and great? The applauſe that ſurrounded you? All gone: All are vaniſhed away, "like as a ſhadow that departeth." "The play is over," ſaid Monſieur *Moultray*, when he ſaw the ball pierce the temples of his dying maſter.* And what cared the courtier for this? No more than if it had been the concluſion of a farce or dance. But while the buffoon ſlept on and took his reſt, it was not ſo with the Monarch. Though he was not terrified with any thing on earth: he would be at the very gates of hell. Vain valour! In the very article of death, he graſped the hilt of his

* Charles XII. King of Sweden, at the ſiege of Fredricſhal.

his ſword! But where was he the next moment, when the ſword dropt out of his hand, and the ſoul out of his body? Then ended the ſplendid dream of royalty, of deſtroying cities, and of conquering kingdoms!

10. "How are the mighty fallen, and the weapons of war periſhed!" What are the weapons that are ſo terrible among *us*, to the inhabitants of eternity? How are the wiſe, the learned, the poet, the critic fallen, and their glory vaniſhed away! How is the beauty fallen, the late idol of a gazing crowd? In how complete a ſenſe are "the daughters of muſic brought low," and all the inſtruments thereof forgotten? Are you not now convinced, that (according to the Hebrew proverb) "a living dog is better than a dead lion?" For, the *living know*, yea *muſt* know, unleſs they obſtinately refuſe, "that they ſhall die. But the dead know not any thing," that will avail for the eaſe of their pain, or to leſſen their miſery. Alſo "their hope and fear, and their deſire," all are periſhed, all of them are fled; "they have not any portion in the things that are done under the ſun!"

11. Where indeed is the *hope* of thoſe who were lately laying deep laid ſchemes, and ſaying, "To-day, or to morrow we will go to ſuch a city, and continue there a year, and traffic and get gain?" How totally had they forgotten that wiſe admonition, "ye know not what ſhall be on the morrow. For, what is your life? It is a vapour that appeareth a while and then vaniſheth away!" Where is all your buſineſs? Where your worldly cares? Your troubles or engagements? All theſe things are fled away like ſmoke: and only your ſoul is left. And how is it qualified for the enjoyment

joyment of this new world? Has it a reliſh for the objects and enjoyments of the inviſible world! Are your affections looſened from things below, and fixt on things above? Fixt on that place, where Jeſus ſitteth at the right hand of God? Then happy are ye: and when he whom ye love ſhall appear, "ye ſhall alſo appear with him in glory."

12. But how do you reliſh the company that ſurrounds you? Your old companions are gone a great part of them probably ſeparated from you, never to return. Are your preſent companions angels of light? Miniſtring ſpirits, that but now whiſpered, "Siſter ſpirit, come away!" "We are ſent to conduct thee over that gulph into Abraham's boſom." And what are thoſe? Some of the ſouls of the righteous, whom thou didſt formerly relieve with "the mammon of unrighteouſneſs," and who are now commiſſioned by your common Lord, to *receive*, to welcome you "into the everlaſting habitations?" Then the angels of darkneſs will quickly diſcern they have no part in you. So they muſt either hover at a diſtance, or flee away in deſpair. Are ſome of theſe happy ſpirits that take acquaintance with you, the ſame that travelled with you below, and bore a part in your temptations? That together with you fought the good fight of faith, and laid hold on eternal life? As you then wept together, you may rejoice together you and your guardian angels perhaps, in order to increaſe your thankfulneſs, for being "delivered from ſo great a death." They may give you a view of the realms below: thoſe

"Regions of ſorrow, doleful ſhades, where peace
And reſt can never dwell."

See

See on the other hand, the manſions which were "prepared for you, from the foundation of the world!" O what a difference between the dream that is paſt, and the real ſcene that is now preſent with thee! Look up! See

"No need of the ſun in that day,
Which never is follow'd by night!
Where Jeſus's beauties diſplay
A pure and a permanent light."

Look down! What a priſon is there!

"'Twixt upper, nether, and ſurrounding fire!"

And what inhabitants! What horrid fearful ſhapes, emblems of their rage againſt God and man; the envy, fury, deſpair fixt within, cauſing them to gnaſh their teeth at Him they ſo long deſpiſed! Mean while does it comfort them to ſee, acroſs the great gulph, the righteous in Abraham's boſom? What a place is that! What "a houſe of God, eternal in the heavens!" Earth is only his footſtool: yea,

"The ſpacious firmament on high,
And all the blue ethereal ſky."

Well then may we ſay to its inhabitants,

"Proclaim the glories of your Lord,
Diſpers'd through all the heav'nly ſtreet;
Whoſe boundleſs treaſures can afford
So rich a pavement for his feet."

And yet how inconſiderable is the glory of that houſe, compared to that of its great inhabitant! In view of whom all the firſt-born ſons of light, angels, archangels, and all the company of heaven, full of light as they are full of love,

"Approach

"Approach not, but with both wings veil their eyes."

13. How wonderful then, now the dream of life is over, now you are quite awake, do all these scenes appear! Even such a sight as never entered or could enter into your hearts to conceive! How are all those that "awake up after his likeness," now satisfied with it? They have now a portion, real, solid, incorruptible, "that fadeth not away." Mean time how exquisitely wretched are they, who (to wave all other considerations) have chosen for their portion those transitory shadows, which now are vanished, and have left them in an abyss of real misery, which must remain to all eternity!

14. Now, considering that every child of man, who is yet upon earth, must sooner or later wake out of this dream, and enter real life; how infinitely does it concern every one of us, to attend to this, before our great change comes! Of what importance is it, to be continually sensible of the condition, wherein we stand! How advisable by every possible means to connect the ideas of time and eternity! So to associate them together, that the thought of one may never recur to your mind, without the thought of the other! It is our highest wisdom, to associate the ideas of the visible and invisible world, to connect temporal and spiritual, mortal and immortal being. Indeed in our common dreams we do not usually know we are asleep, whilst we are in the midst of our dream. As neither do we know it, while we are in the midst of the dream, which we call life. But you may be conscious of it now! God grant you may! before you awake in a winding-sheet of fire!

15. What

15. What an admirable foundation for thus aſſociating the ideas of time and eternity, of the viſible and inviſible world, is laid in the nature of religion! For what is religion? (I mean ſcriptural religion, for all other is the vaineſt of all dreams.) What is the very root of this religion? It is Immanuel, God with us! God in man! Heaven connected with earth! The unſpeakable union of mortal with immortal. For "truly our fellowſhip (may all chriſtians ſay) is with the Father, and with his Son Jeſus Chriſt. God hath given unto us eternal life; and this life is in his Son." What follows? "He that hath the Son hath life: and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life."

16. But how ſhall we retain a conſtant ſenſe of this? I have often thought in my waking hours, "Now, when I fall aſleep, and ſee ſuch and ſuch things, I will remember, it was but a dream." Yet I could not, while the dream laſted; and probably none elſe can. But it is otherwiſe with the dream of life, which we do remember to be ſuch, even while it laſts. And if we do forget it, (as we are indeed apt to do) a friend may remind us of it. It is much to be wiſhed, that ſuch a friend were always near: one that would frequently ſound in our ear, "awake thou that ſleepeſt, and ariſe from the dead!" Soon you will awake into real life. You will ſtand a naked ſpirit in the world of ſpirits, before the face of the great God! See that you now hold faſt that "eternal life, which he hath given you in his Son."

17. How admirably does this life of God branch out into the whole of religion! I mean ſcriptural religion. As ſoon as God reveals his Son in the heart of a ſinner, he is enabled to

ſay,

ſay, "The life that I now liive, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himſelf for me." He then "rejoices in hope of the glory of God, even with joy unſpeakable. And in conſequence both of this faith and hope, the love of God is ſhed abroad in his heart, which filling the ſoul with love to all mankind, "is the fulfilling of the law."

18. And how wonderfully do both faith and love connect God with man, and time with eternity! In conſideration of this, we may boldly ſay,——

"Vaniſh then this world of ſhadows;
Paſs the former things away;
Lord, appear! appear to glad us,
With the dawn of endleſs day!

O conclude this mortal ſtory;
Throw this univerſe aſide:
Come, eternal King of Glory,
Now deſcend,—and take thy Bride!"

SERMON

SERMON CXXII.

ON THE DECEITFULNESS OF THE HEART.

JEREMIAH xvii. 9.

The heart of man is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?

1. THE most eminent of the ancient Heathens have left us many testimonies of this. It was indeed their common opinion, that there was a time, when men in general were virtuous and happy: this they termed the *golden age*. And the account of this was spread through almost all nations. But it was likewise generally believed, that this happy age had expired long ago. And that men are now in the midst of the *iron age*. At the commencement of this, says the Poet,

Irrupit venæ perjoris in ævum
Omne nefas: fugere pudor, verumq: fidesq:
In quorum subiere locum fraudesq: doliq:
Insidiæque, & vis, & amor sceleratus habendi.

Immediately broke in
With a full tide, all wickedneſs and ſin:
Shame, truth, fidelity ſwift fled away,
And curſed thirſt of gold bore unreſiſted ſway.

2. But how much more knowing than theſe old Pagans, are the preſent generation of Chriſtians! How many laboured Panegyrics do we now read and hear on the Dignity of Human Nature? One eminent Preacher, in one of his ſermons preached and printed a few years ago, does not ſcruple to affirm, firſt, That men in general, (if not every individual,) are very *wiſe*: ſecondly, That men in general are very *virtuous*, and thirdly, That they are very *happy*. And I do not know, that any one yet has been ſo hardy, as to controvert the aſſertion.

3. Nearly related to them were the ſentiments of an ingenious gentleman, who being aſked, "My Lord, what do you think of the Bible?" anſwered, "I think it is the fineſt book I ever read in my life. Only that part of it which indicates the Mediatorial Scheme I do not underſtand. For I do not conceive there is any need of a Mediator between God and man. If indeed, continued he, I was a ſinner, then I ſhould need a Mediator. But I do not conceive, I am. It is true, I often act wrong for want of more underſtanding. And I frequently *feel* wrong tempers, particularly proneneſs to anger. But I cannot allow this to be a ſin: for it depends on the motion of my blood and ſpirits, which I cannot help. Therefore it cannot be a ſin. Or if it be, the blame muſt fall not on *me*, but on him that made me." The very ſentiments of pious Lord *Kaim*, and modeſt Mr. *Hume*.

4. Some

4. Some years ago a charitable woman discovered, That there was no sinner in the world, but the Devil. For, said she, "he *forces* men to act as they do, therefore they are unaccountable. The blame lights on Satan." But these more enlightened gentlemen have discovered, "That there is no sinner in the world but God. For he *forces* men to think, speak and act as they do; therefore the blame lights on God alone." Satan, avaunt! It may be doubted, whether he himself ever uttered so foul a blasphemy as this.

5. But whatever unbaptized or baptized Infidels may say, concerning the innocence of mankind, He that made man, and that best knows what he has made, gives a very different account of him. He informs us, that "the heart of man," of all mankind, of every man born into the world, "is desperately wicked," and that it is "deceitful above all things," so that we may well ask, "Who can know it?"

I. 1. To begin with this: "The heart of man is desperately wicked." In considering this, we have no need to refer to any particular sins. (These are no more than the leaves, or at most the fruits, which spring from that evil tree:) but rather to the general root of all. See how this was first planted in heaven itself, by Lucifer, *Son of the morning;* till then undoubtedly "one of the first if not the first archangel;" "Thou saidst, I will sit upon the side of the North." See self-will, the first-born of Satan! "I will be like the Most High." See pride, the twin-sister of self will. Here was the true origin of evil. Hence came the inexhaustible flood of evils, upon the lower world. When Satan had once transfused his own self-will and pride into the

parents of mankind, together with a new ſpecies of ſin: Love of the world, the loving the creature above the Creator, all manner of wickedneſs ſoon ruſhed in, all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs, ſhooting out into crimes of every kind, ſoon covering the whole face of the earth with all manner of abominations. It would be an endleſs taſk, to enumerate all the the enormities that broke out. Now the fountains of the great deep were broken up. The earth ſoon became a field of blood: revenge, cruelty, ambition, with all ſorts of injuſtice, every ſpecies of public and private wrongs, were diffuſed through every part of the earth. Injuſtice in ten thouſand forms, hatred, envy, malice, blood-thirſtineſs; with every ſpecies of falſehood, rode triumphant, till the Creator looking down from heaven, would be no more intreated for an incorrigible race, but ſwept them off from the face of the earth. But how little were the following generations improved, by the ſevere judgment? They that lived after the flood do not appear to have been a whit better than thoſe that lived before it. In a ſhort time, probably before *Noah* was removed from the earth, all unrighteouſneſs prevailed as before.

2. But is there not a God in the world? Doubtleſs there is: And it is he that hath made us, not we ourſelves. He made us gratuitouſly, of his own mercy: for we could merit nothing of him, before we had a being. It is of his mercy that he made us at all; that he made us ſenſible, rational creatures, and above all, creatures capable of God. It is this and this alone, which puts the eſſential difference between men and brutes. But if he has made us, and given

us

us all we have; if we owe all we are and have to him, then ſurely he has a right to all we are and have, to all our love and obedience. This has been acknowledged by almoſt all who believed themſelves to be his creatures, in all ages and nations. But a few years ago a learned man frankly confeſſed, "I could never apprehend, that God's having created us, gave him any title to the government of us. Or, that his having created us laid us under any obligation to yield him our obedience." I believe that Dr. *Hutchinſon* was the firſt man, that ever made any doubt of this. Or that ever doubted, much leſs denied, That a creature was obliged to obey his Creator. If Satan ever entertained this thought, (but it is not probable he ever did) it would be no wonder he ſhould rebel againſt God, and raiſe war in heaven. And hence would enmity againſt God ariſe in the hearts of men alſo; together with all the branches of ungodlineſs, which abounded therein at this day. Hence would naturally ariſe the neglect of every duty which we owe to him, as our Creator, and all the paſſions and hopes which are directly oppoſite to every ſuch duty.

3. From the devil, the ſpirit of independence, ſelf-will and pride, productive of all ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs, quickly infuſed themſelves into the hearts of our firſt parents in Paradiſe. After they had eaten of the tree of knowledge, wickedneſs and miſery of every kind, ruſhed in with a full tide upon the earth, alienated us from God, and made way for all the reſt: Atheiſm, (now faſhionably termed *Diſſipation*,) and idolatry, love of the world, ſeeking happineſs in this or that creature, covered the whole earth,

Upright both in heart and will,
We by our God were made:
But we turn'd from good to ill,
And o'er the creatures ſtray'd:
Multiplied our wand'ring thought,
Which firſt was fixt on God alone,
In ten thouſand objects ſought
The bliſs we loſt in one.

4. It would be endleſs to enumerate all the ſpecies of wickedneſs, whether in thought, word, or action, that now overſpread the earth, in every nation, and city, and family. They all center in this Atheiſm, or Idolatry: Pride, either thinking of themſelves more highly than they ought to think, or glorying in ſomething which they have received, as though they had not received it: Independence and ſelf-will, doing their own will, not the will of him that made them. Add to this, ſeeking happineſs out of God, in gratifying the deſire of the fleſh, the deſire of the eye, and the pride of life. Hence it is a melancholy truth, that (unleſs when the Spirit of God has made the difference) *all mankind* now as well as four thouſand years ago, "have corrupted their ways before the Lord: and every imagination of the thought of man's heart is evil, only evil, and that continually." However therefore men may differ in their outward ways, in which undoubtedly there are a thouſand differences,) yet in the inward root, the enmity againſt God, Atheiſm, Pride, Self-will and Idolatry, it is true of all, that *the heart of man*, of every natural man, *is deſperately wicked.*

5. But if this be the caſe, how is it that every one is not conſcious of it? For who ſhould

"know

"know the things of a man, like the ſpirit of a man that is in him?" Why is it that ſo few know themſelves? For this plain reaſon, Becauſe *the heart* is not only "deſperately wicked, but deceitful above all things." So deceitful, that we may well aſk, "Who can know it?" Who indeed, ſave God that made it? By his aſſiſtance, we may, in the ſecond place conſider this, the deceitfulneſs of man's heart.

II. 1. "It is deceitful above all things," that is, in the higheſt degree, above all that we can conceive. So deceitful that the generality of men are continually deceiving both themſelves and others. How ſtrangely do they deceive themſelves, not knowing either their own tempers or characters. Imagining themſelves to be abundantly better and wiſer than they are. The ancient Poet ſuppoſes, there is no exception to this rule; that no man is willing to know his own heart —*At nemo in ſeſe tentant deſcendere, nemo!*—None but thoſe who are taught of God!

2. And if men thus deceive themſelves, is it any wonder that they deceive others alſo, and that we ſo ſeldom find an "Iſraelite indeed, in whom there is no guile!" In looking over my books ſome years ago, I found the following memorandum, "I am this day thirty years old, and till this day I know not, that I have met with one perſon of that age, except in my father's houſe, who did not uſe Guile, more or leſs."

3. This is one of the ſorts of deſperate wickedneſs, which cleaves to the nature of every man, proceeding from thoſe fruitful roots, Self-will, Pride and Independence on God. Hence ſprings every ſpecies of vice and wickedneſs; hence every

ſin

ſin againſt God, our neighbour and ourſelves. Againſt God: forgetfulneſs and contempt of God, of his name, his day, his word, his ordinances; Atheiſm on the one hand, and Idolatry on the other; in particular, Love of the world, the deſire of the fleſh, the deſire of the eyes, and the pride of life; the love of money, the love of power, the love of eaſe, the love of the "honour that cometh of men," the love of the creature more than the Creator, the being lovers of pleaſure more than lovers of God. Againſt our neighbour: ingratitude, revenge, hatred, envy, malice, uncharitableneſs.

4 Hence there is in the heart of every child of man, an inexhauſtible fund of ungodlineſs and unrighteouſneſs, deeply and ſtrongly rooted in the ſoul, that nothing leſs than Almighty grace can cure it. From hence naturally ariſes a plentiful harveſt of all evil words and works: and to complete the whole, that complex of all evils,—

"That foul monſter, war, that we meet,
Lays deep the nobleſt work of the creation,
Which wears in vain its Maker's glorious image,
Unprivileged from Thee!"

In the train of this fell monſter, are murder, adultery, rape, violence and cruelty of every kind. And all theſe abominations are not only found in Mahometan or Pagan countries, where their horrid practice may be ſeen to be the natural reſult of equally horrid principles; but in thoſe that are called Chriſtian countries, yea, in the moſt knowing and civilized States and Kingdoms. And let it not be ſaid, this is only the caſe in Roman Catholic countries. Nay, we that are called Reformed, are not one whit behind them in

in all manner of wickedneſs. Indeed no crime ever prevailed among the *Turks* and *Tartars*, which we here cannot parallel in every part of Chriſtendom. Nay, no ſin ever appeared in Heathen or Papal *Rome*, which is not found at this day, in *Germany*, *France*, *Holland*, *England*, and every other Proteſtant as well as Popiſh country. So that it might now be ſaid, with as much truth, and as few exceptions, of every Court in *Europe*, as it was formerly of the Court of *Saul*, "There is none righteous, no not one: they are all together become abominable: there is none that underſtandeth and ſeeketh after God."

5. But, is there no exception as to the wickedneſs of man's heart? Yes, in thoſe that are born of God. "He that is born of God keepeth himſelf, and that wicked one toucheth him not." *God has purified his heart by faith*, ſo that his wickedneſs is departed from him. "Old things are paſſed away, and all things (in him) are become new." So that his heart is no longer deſperately wicked, but "renewed in righteouſneſs and true holineſs." Only let it be remembered, that the heart even of a believer, is not wholly purified when he is juſtified. Sin is then overcome; but is not rooted out: it is conquered, but not deſtroyed. Experience ſhews him, firſt, That the root of ſin, ſelf-will, pride and idolatry remain ſtill in his heart. But as long as he continues to watch and pray, none of them can prevail againſt him. Experience teaches him, ſecondly, that ſin (generally pride or ſelf-will) cleaves to his beſt actions. So that even with regard to theſe, he finds an abſolute neceſſity for the blood of atonement.

6. But

6. But how artfully does this conceal itſelf, not only from others, but even from ourſelves. Who can diſcover it in all the diſguiſes it aſſumes, or trace it through all its latent mazes? And if it be ſo difficult to know the heart of a good man, who *can know* the heart of a wicked one, which is far more deceitful? No unregenerate man, however ſenſible, ever ſo experienced, ever ſo wiſe in his generation. And yet theſe are they who pique themſelves upon *knowing the world*, and imagine they *ſee through* all men! Vain men! One may boldly ſay, they *know nothing yet as they ought to know*. Even that Politician in the late reign, neither knew the heart of himſelf or of other men, whoſe favourite ſaying was, "Do not tell me of your virtue or religion: I tell you, every man has his price." Yes, Sir *R*—; every man like *you*: every one that ſells himſelf to the Devil.

7. Did that right honourable wretch, compared to whom Sir *R*—was a ſaint, know the heart of man? He that ſo earneſtly adviſed his own ſon, "Never to ſpeak the truth? To lie or diſſemble as often as he ſpeaks? To wear a maſk continually? That earneſtly counſelled him, Not to debauch *ſingle women*, (becauſe ſome inconveniences might follow) but always married women." Would one imagine this groveling animal ever had a wife or a married daughter of his own? O rare Lord *C*——! Did ever man ſo well deſerve, though he was a Peer of the Realm, to die by the ſide of *Newgate*? Or did ever book ſo well deſerve to be burnt by the common hangman as his Letters? Did Mr. *David Hume*, lower, if poſſible than either of the former, know the heart of man?

No

No more than a worm or a beetle does. After "playing so idly with the darts of death;" do you now find it a laughing matter? What think you now of *Charon?* Has he ferried you over *Styx?* At length he has taught you to know a little of your own heart! At length you know it is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God!

8. One of the ablest Champions of infidelity (perhaps the most elegant, and the most decent writer, that ever produced a System of Religion, without being in the least obliged to the Bible for it,) breaks out in the fulness of his heart, "Who would not wish that there was full proof of the Christian Revelation, since it is undoubtedly the most benevolent System that ever appeared in the world!" Might he not add a reason of another kind; because without this, man must be altogether a mystery to himself. Even with the help of Revelation, he knows exceeding little. But without it, he would know abundantly less. And nothing with any certainty. Without the light which is given us by the oracles of God, how could we reconcile his greatness with his meanness? While we acknowledge with Sir *John Davis*,

"I know my soul has power to know all things,
Yet is the blind and ignorant of all:
I know I'm one of Nature's little Kings,
Yet to the least and vilest things in thrall."

9. Who then knoweth the hearts of all men? Surely none but he that made them. Who knoweth his own heart? Who can tell the depth of its enmity against God? Who knoweth how deeply it is sunk into the nature of Satan?

III. 1. From

III. 1. From the preceding conſiderations may we not learn, firſt, "He that truſteth in his own heart is a fool." For who that is wiſe would truſt one whom he knows to be *deſperately wicked?* Eſpecially, whom he hath known, by a thouſand experiments, to be *deceitful above all things?* What can we expect, if we ſtill truſt a known liar and deceiver, but to be deceived and cheated to the end?

2. We may hence, in the ſecond place, infer the truth of that other reflexion of *Solomon*, "Seeſt thou a man that is wiſe in his own eyes? There is more hope of a fool than of him." For at what diſtance from wiſdom muſt that man be, who never ſuſpected his want of it? And will not his thinking ſo well of himſelf, prevent his receiving inſtruction from others? Will he not be apt to be diſpleaſed at admonition, and to conſtrue reproof into reproach? Will he not therefore be leſs ready to receive inſtruction, than even one that has little natural underſtanding? Surely no fool is ſo incapable of amendment, as one that imagines himſelf to be wiſe. He that ſuppoſes himſelf not to need a Phyſician, will hardly profit by his advice.

3. May we not learn hence, thirdly, the wiſdom of that caution, "Let him who thinketh he ſtandeth take heed leſt he fall:" Or (to render the text more properly,) *Let him that aſſuredly ſtandeth take heed leſt he fall.* How firmly ſoever he may ſtand, he has ſtill a deceitful heart. In how many inſtances has he been deceived already? And ſo he may again. Suppoſe he be not deceived now, does it follow that he never will? Does he not ſtand upon ſlippery ground? And is he not

not ſurrounded with ſnares? Into which he may fall and riſe no more.

4. Is it not wiſdom, for him that is now ſtanding, continually to cry to God, "Search me, O Lord, and prove me; try out my reins and my heart! Look well, if there be any way of wickedneſs in me, and lead me in the way everlaſting?" Thou alone, O God, *knoweſt the hearts of the children of men.* O ſhew thou me what ſpirit I am of, and let me not deceive my own ſoul. Let me not *think of myſelf more highly than I ought to think.* But let me always *think ſoberly, according as thou haſt given me the meaſure of faith!*

Halifax, April 21, 1790.

SERMON CXXIII.

THE MOST VALUABLE TREASURE.

2 CORINTHIANS iv. 7.

We have this treasure in earthen vessels.

1. HOW long was man a mere riddle to himself? For how many ages were the wisest of men utterly unable to reveal the mystery, to reconcile the strange inconsistencies in him, the wonderful mixture of good and evil, of greatness and littleness, of nobleness and barrenness? The more deeply they considered these things, the more they were entangled. The more pains they took in order to clear up the subject, the more they were bewildered in vain, uncertain conjectures.

2. But, what all the wisdom of man was unable to do, was in due time done by the wisdom of God. When it pleased God to give an account of the origin of things, and of man in particular, all the darkness vanished away, and the clear

clear light ſhone. "God ſaid, Let us make man in our own image." It was done. In the image of God man was made. Hence we are enabled to give a clear ſatisfactory account of the greatneſs, the excellency, the dignity of man. But *man being in honour* did not continue therein, but rebelled againſt his ſovereign Lord. Hereby he totally loſt not only the favour, but likewiſe the image of God. And *in Adam all died.* For fallen *Adam* begat a ſon *in his own likeneſs.* And hence we are taught, to give a clear, intelligible account of the littleneſs and baſeneſs of man. He is ſunk, even below the beaſts that periſh. Human nature now is not only *ſenſual* but *deviliſh.* There is in every man born into the world (what is not in any part of the brute Creation: no beaſt is fallen ſo low!) a *carnal mind*, which *is enmity*, direct enmity *againſt God.*

3. By conſidering therefore theſe things in one view, the creation and the fall of man, all the inconſiſtencies of his nature are eaſily and fully underſtood. The greatneſs and littleneſs, the dignity and baſeneſs, the happineſs and miſery of his preſent ſtate, are no longer a myſtery, but clear conſequences of his original ſtate, and his rebellion againſt God. This is the key that opens the whole myſtery, that removes all the difficulty, by ſhewing, what God made man at firſt, and what man has made himſelf. It is true, he may regain a conſiderable meaſure of "the image of God wherein he was created." But ſtill, whatever we regain, we ſhall "have this treaſure in earthen veſſels."

In order to have a clear conception of this, we may enquire, firſt, *What is the treaſure which*

we now *have;* and in the second place consider, How we have this treasure in *earthen vessels.*

I. 1. And first, let us enquire, What is *this treasure* which Christian believers have? I say, believers; for it is of these directly that the Apostle is here speaking. Part of this they have in common with other men, in the remains of the image of God. May we not include herein, first, an immaterial principle, a spiritual nature, endued with understanding, and affections, and a degree of liberty, of a self-moving, yea, and self-governing power, (otherwise we were mere machines, stocks and stones.) And secondly, all that is vulgarly called, Natural Conscience, implying some discernment of the difference between moral good and evil, with an approbation of the one, and disapprobation of the other, by an inward monitor excusing or accusing? Certainly whether this is natural, or superadded by the grace of God, it is found, at least in some small degree, in every child of man. Something of this is found in every human heart, passing sentence concerning good and evil, not only in all Christians, but in all Mahometans, all Pagans, yea the vilest of Savages.

2. May we not believe, that all Christians, though but nominally such, have sometimes at least some desire to please God? As well as some light concerning what does really please him, and some convictions, when they are sensible of displeasing him? Such treasure have all the children of men, more or less, even when they do not yet know God.

3. But it is not these of whom the Apostle is here speaking, neither is this the treasure which is the subject of his discourse. The persons concerning

cerning whom he is here ſpeaking, are thoſe that are born of God, thoſe that "being juſtified by faith, have now redemption in the blood of Jeſus, even the forgiveneſs of ſins: thoſe who enjoy that peace of God, which paſſeth all underſtanding; whoſe ſoul doth magnify the Lord, and rejoice in him with joy unſpeakable; and who feel the "Love of God ſhed abroad in their hearts by the Holy Ghoſt which is given unto them." This then is the treaſure which they have received, a faith of the operation of God, a peace which ſets them above the fear of death, and enables them in every thing to be content: an hope full of immortality, whereby they already "taſte of the powers of the world to come;" the love of God ſhed abroad in their hearts, with love to every child of man, and a renewal in the whole image of God, in all righteouſneſs and true holineſs. This is properly and directly the treaſure, concerning which the Apoſtle is here ſpeaking.

II. 1. But this, invaluable as it is, *we have in earthen veſſels.* The word is exquiſitely proper, denoting both the brittleneſs of the veſſels, and the meanneſs of the matter they are made of. It directly means what we term *earthen ware*; China, Porcelain, and the like. How weak, how eaſily broke in pieces! Juſt ſuch is the caſe with a holy Chriſtian. We have the heavenly treaſure in earthly, mortal, corruptible bodies. "Duſt thou art," ſaid the righteous Judge, to his rebellious creature, till then incorruptible and immortal, "and to duſt thou ſhalt return." How finely (but with what a mixture of light and darkneſs,) does the Heathen Poet touch upon this change!

Poſt ignem etherea domo
Subduxerat.

"After man had ſtolen fire from heaven."

(What an emblem of forbidden knowledge.) *Magna & nova febrium, &c.* that unknown army of conſumptions, fevers, ſickneſs, pain of every kind, fixt their camp upon earth, which till then they could no more have entered, than they could ſcale heaven: and all tended to introduce and pave the way for the laſt enemy death. From the moment that awful ſentence was pronounced, the body received the ſentence of death in itſelf: if not from the moment our firſt parents completed their rebellion, by eating of the forbidden fruit. May we not probably conjecture that there was ſome quality naturally in this, which ſowed the ſeeds of death in the human body, till then incorruptible and immortal? Be this as it may, it is certain that from this time, "the corruptible body has preſſed down the ſoul." And no marvel: ſeeing the ſoul, during its vital union with the body, cannot exert any of its operations, any otherwiſe than in union with the body, with its bodily organs. But all of theſe are more debaſed and improved by the fall of man, than we can poſſibly conceive: and the brain, on which the ſoul more directly depends, not leſs than the reſt of the body. Conſequently, if theſe inſtruments by which the ſoul works are diſordered; the ſoul itſelf muſt be hindered in its operations. Let a Muſician be ever ſo ſkilful, he will make but poor muſic, if his inſtrument be out of tune. From a diſordered brain, (ſuch as is more or leſs, that of every child of man,) there will neceſſarily ariſe confuſedneſs of apprehenſion, ſhewing itſelf in

in a thouſand inſtances, falſe judgment, the natural reſult thereof, and wrong inferences; and from theſe, innumerable miſtakes will follow, in ſpite of all the caution we can uſe. But miſtakes in the judgment will frequently give occaſion to miſtakes in practice: they will naturally cauſe our ſpeaking wrong in ſome inſtances, and acting wrong in others: nay, they may occaſion not only wrong words or actions, but wrong tempers alſo. If I judge a man to be better than he really is, in conſequence I really love him more than he deſerves. If I judge another to be worſe than he really is, I ſhall in conſequence love him leſs than he deſerves. Now both theſe are wrong tempers. Yet poſſibly it may not be in my power to avoid either the one or the other.

2. Such are the unavoidable conſequences of having theſe *treaſures* in *earthen veſſels*. Not only death and its forerunners, ſickneſs, weakneſs and pain, and a thouſand infirmities, but likewiſe error in ten thouſand ſhapes will be always ready to attack us. Such is the preſent condition of humanity! Such the ſtate of the wiſeſt men! Lord, "what is man, that thou art ſtill mindful of him, or the ſon of man that thou regardeſt him!"

3. Something of this great truth, that the "corruptible body preſſes down the ſoul," is ſtrongly expreſſed in thoſe celebrated lines of the ancient Poet: ſpeaking of the ſouls of men, he ſays,

Igneus eſt o'lis vigor & celeſtis origo
Seminibus, quantum non noxia corpora tardu
Terreniq; hebetant artus moribundaq; me
bra.

"These seeds of heavenly fire
With strength innate would to their source aspire,
But that their earthly limbs obstruct their flight,
And check their soaring to the plains of light."

4. But suppose it pleased the All-wise Creator, for the sin of man, to suffer the souls of men in general, to be weighed down in this miserable manner, by their corruptible body: why does he permit the excellent treasure which he has intrusted to his own children, to be still lodged in these poor earthen vessels? Would not this question naturally occur to any reflecting mind? Perhaps it would; and therefore the apostle immediately furnishes us with a full answer; God has done this, that "the excellency of the power might be of God, and not of us;" that it might be undeniably plain, to whom that excellent power belonged: that no flesh might glory in his sight but that all who have received this treasure, might continually cry, "Not unto us, but unto thee, O Lord, be the praise, for thy name and for thy truth's sake."

5. Undoubtedly this was the main design of God, in this wonderful dispensation, to humble man, to make and keep him little and poor, and base and vile in his own eyes. And whatever we suffer hereby, we are well repaid, if it be a means of *hiding pride from man;* of laying us low in the dust, even then, when we are most in danger of being lifted up by the excellent gifts of God.

6. Nay, if we suffer hereby, from the mean habitation of the immortal spirit; if pain, sickness, and numberless other afflictions beside, to which

which we ſhould not otherwiſe have been liable, aſſault us on every ſide, and at length bear us down into the duſt of death: what are we loſers by this? Loſers! No, "In all theſe things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us:" come on then, diſeaſe, weakneſs, pain: afflictions (in the language of men.) Shall we not be infinite gainers by them? Gainers for ever and ever! Seeing "theſe light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory!"

7. And are we not by the conſciouſneſs of our preſent weakneſs effectually taught wherein our ſtrength lies? How loud does it proclaim, "Truſt in the Lord Jehovah, for in him is everlaſting ſtrength?" Truſt in him who ſuffered a thouſand times more than ever you can ſuffer! Hath he not all power in heaven and earth! Then what though

"The heavenly treaſure now we have
In a vile houſe of clay!
Yet he ſhall to the utmoſt ſave,
And keep it to that day."

Potta, June 17, 1790.

SERMON

SERMON CXXIV.

ON BEING WITHOUT GOD IN THE WORLD.

EPHESIANS ii. 12.

Without God in the world.

1. PERHAPS theſe words might be more properly tranſlated "Atheiſts in the world." This ſeems to be a little ſtronger expreſſion, than "without God in the world," which ſounds nearly negative, and does not neceſſarily imply any more, than the having no fellowſhip or intercourſe with God. On the contrary, the word *Atheiſt* is commonly underſtood to mean ſomething *poſitive*, and not only diſclaiming any intercourſe with him, but denying his very Being.

2. The caſe of theſe unhappy men may be much illuſtrated by a late incident; the truth of which cannot reaſonably be doubted, there having been ſo large a number of eye witneſſes. An ancient oak being cut down and ſplit through the midſt, out of the very heart of the tree, crept a large

a large toad, and walked away, with all the ſpeed he could. Now how long, may we probably imagine, had this creature continued there? It is not unlikely it might have remained in its neſt above a hundred years. It is not improbable, it was nearly, if not altogether, coeval with the oak; having been ſome way or other incloſed therein, at the time that it was planted. It is not therefore unreaſonable to ſuppoſe, that it had lived that ſtrange kind of life, at leaſt a century. We ſay, *it had lived!* But what manner of life? How deſirable! How enviable! As *Cowley* ſays,

" O Life, moſt precious and moſt dear!
O Life, that Epicures would long to ſhare!"

Let us ſpend a few thoughts upon ſo uncommon a caſe, and make ſome improvement of it.

3. This poor animal had organs of ſenſe: yet it had not any ſenſation. It had eyes, yet no ray of light ever entered its black abode. From the very firſt inſtant of its exiſtence there, it was ſhut up in impenetrable darkneſs. It was ſhut up from the ſun, moon and ſtars, and from the beautiful face of nature. Indeed from the whoſe viſible world, as much as if it had no being.

4. As no air could penetrate its ſable receſs, it conſequently could have no *hearing*. Whatever organs it was provided with, they could be of no uſe: ſeeing no undulating air could find a way through the walls that ſurrounded it. And there is no reaſon to believe, that it had any ſenſe analagous to thoſe either of *ſmelling* or *taſting*. In a creature, which did not need any food, the ſecond would have been of no poſſible uſe.

Neither

Neither was there any way, whereby the objects of smell or taste could make their approach to it. It must be very little if it all, that it could be acquainted even with the general sense, that of *feeling:* as it always continued in one unvaried posture amidst the parts that surrounded it, all of these being immoveably fixt, could make no new impression upon it. So that it had only one feeling from hour to hour, and from day to day, during its whole duration.

5. And as this poor animal was destitute of *sensation*, it must have equally been destitute of *reflection*. Its head, (of whatever sort it was,) having no materials to work upon, no ideas of sensation of any kind, could not produce any degree of reflection. It scarce therefore could have any *memory*, or any *imagination*. Nor could it have any locative *Power*, while it was so closely bound in on every side. If it had in itself some springs of motion, yet it was impossible that power should be exerted, because the narrowness of its cavern could not allow of any change of place.

6. How exact a parallel may be drawn between this creature (hardly to be called an animal) and a man that is *without God in the world?* Such as are a vast majority of even those that are called Christians! I do not mean that they are *Atheists*, in the common sense of the word. I do not believe, that these are so numerous as many have imagined. Making all the enquiry and observation I could upon upwards of fifty years, I could not find twenty who seriously disbelieved the being of a God: nay, I have found only two of these, (to the best of my judgment,) in the *British* Islands. both of these then lived in *London*, and

and had been of this perſuaſion many years. But ſeveral years before they were called to appear before God, both *John S*——— and *John B*——— were fully convinced, That there is a God, and what is more remarkable, they were firſt convinced that he is a terrible, and then, that he is a merciful God. I mention theſe two accounts, to ſhew, not only that there are real literal *Atheiſts* in the world! but alſo, that even then if they will condeſcend to aſk it, they may find "grace to help in time of need."

7. But I do not mean ſuch as theſe, when I ſpeak of thoſe who are *Atheiſts*, or "without God in the world." But of ſuch as are only practical *Atheiſts*, as have not God in all their thoughts: ſuch as have not acquainted themſelves with him, neither have any fellowſhip with him: ſuch as have no more intercourſe with God or the inviſible world, than this animal had with the viſible. I will endeavour to draw the parallel between theſe. And may God apply it to their hearts!

8. Every one of theſe is in exactly ſuch a ſituation with regard to the inviſible, as the toad was in reſpect to the viſible world. That creature had undoubtedly a ſort of life, ſuch as it was. It certainly had all the internal and external parts, that are eſſential to animal life. And without queſtion it had ſuitable juices, which kept up a kind of circulation. This was a life indeed! And exactly ſuch a life as that of the *Atheiſt*; the man without God in the world. What a thick veil is between him and the inviſible world! Which with regard to him is as tho' it had no being. He has not the leaſt perception of it; not the moſt diſtant idea. He has not the leaſt ſight of God, the intellectual Sun; nor any, the leaſt attrac-

tion toward him, or desire to have any knowledge of his ways: although his light be gone forth into all lands, and his sound into the end of the world, yet he *heareth* no more thereof than of the fabled music of the spheres. He *tastes* nothing of the goodness of God, or the powers of the world to come. He does not *feel* (as our Church speaks) the working of the Holy Spirit in his heart. In a word, he has no more intercourse with, or knowledge of the spiritual world, than this poor creature had of the natural, while shut up in its dark inclosure.

9. But the moment the Spirit of the Almighty strikes the heart of him that was till then without God in the world, it breaks the hardness of his heart, and creates all things new. The Sun of Righteousness appears, and shines upon his soul, shewing him the light of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ. He is in a new world. All things round him are become new. Such as it never before entered into his heart to conceive. He sees, so far as his newly opened eyes can bear the sight.

"The opening heavens around him shine,
With beams of sacred bliss."

He sees, that he has "an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous, and that he has redemption in his blood, the remission of sins." He sees a "new way that is opened into the Holiest by the blood of Jesus; and his light shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

10. By the same gracious stroke, he that before had ears but heard not, is now made capable of *hearing*. He hears the voice that raiseth the dead, the voice of him that is the Resurrection

tion and the Life. He is no longer deaf to his invitations or commands, to his promiſes or threatenings, but gladly hears every word that proceeds out of his mouth: and governs thereby, all his thoughts, words, and actions.

11. At the ſame time he receives other ſpiritual ſenſes, capable of diſcerning ſpiritual good and evil. He is enabled to *taſte* as well as to ſee, how gracious the Lord is. He enters into the Holieſt by the blood of Jeſus, and taſtes of the powers of the world to come. He finds Jeſus' love far better than wine, yea ſweeter than honey or the honey-comb. He knows what that meaneth, "all thy garments ſmell of myrrh, aloes and caſſia." He *feels* the love of God ſhed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghoſt which is given unto him: or, as our church expreſſes it, "feels the workings of the Spirit of God in his heart." Mean time it may eaſily be obſerved, that the ſubſtance of all theſe figurative expreſſions is comprized in that one word Faith, taken in its wideſt ſenſe: being enjoyed more or leſs, by every one that believes in the name of the Son of God. This change from ſpiritual death to ſpiritual life, is properly the New Birth: all the particulars whereof are admirably well expreſt by Dr. *Watts* in one verſe,

"Renew my eyes, open my ears,
And form my ſoul afreſh;
Give me new paſſions, joys, and fears,
And turn the ſtone to fleſh."

12. But before this univerſal change, there may be many partial changes in a natural man, which are frequently miſtaken for it, whereby many ſay peace, peace to their ſouls, when there

is no peace. There may be not only a conſiderable change in the life, ſo as to refrain from open ſin, yea, the eaſily beſetting ſin: but alſo a conſiderable change of tempers, conviction of ſin, ſtrong deſires and good reſolutions. And here we have need to take great care, not, on the one hand to deſpiſe the day of ſmall things, nor on the other, to miſtake any of theſe partial changes, for that entire, general change the New Birth; that total change, from the image of the earthly *Adam*, into the image of the heavenly; from an earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh mind, into the mind that was in Chriſt.

13. Settle it therefore in your hearts, that however you may be changed in many other reſpects, yet in Chriſt Jeſus, that is, according to the Chriſtian inſtitution, nothing will avail, without the whole mind that was in Chriſt, enabling you to walk as Chriſt walked. Nothing is more ſure than this, "If any man be in Chriſt," a true believer in him, "he is a new creature: old things in him are paſſed away, all things are become new."

14. From hence we may clearly perceive, the wide difference there is between Chriſtianity and Morality. Indeed nothing can be more ſure than that true Chriſtianity cannot exiſt, without both the inward experience, and outward practice of juſtice, mercy and truth; and this alone is given in Morality. But it is equally certain, that all Morality, all the juſtice, mercy, and truth, which can poſſibly exiſt without Chriſtianity, profiteth nothing at all, is of no value in the ſight of God, to thoſe that are under the chriſtian diſpenſation." Let it be obſerved, I purpoſely add, to thoſe that are under the chriſtian diſpenſation, because

cauſe I have no authority from the word of God, "to judge thoſe that are without:" Nor do I conceive, that any man living has a right to ſentence all the Heathen and Mahometan world to damnation. It is far better, to leave them to Him that made them, and who is "the Father of the ſpirits of all fleſh:" who is the God of the Heathens, as well as the Chriſtians, and who hateth nothing that he hath made. But mean time, this is nothing to thoſe that name the name of Chriſt: all thoſe being *under the law*, the Chriſtian law, ſhall undoubtedly be judged thereby. And of conſequence, unleſs thoſe be ſo changed as was the animal above mentioned, unleſs they have new ſenſes, ideas, paſſions, tempers, they are no Chriſtians! However juſt, true, or merciful they may be, they are but *Atheiſts* ſtill.

15. Perhaps there may be ſome well-meaning perſons, who carry this farther ſtill: who aver, whatever change is wrought in men, whether in their hearts or lives, yet if they have not clear views of thoſe cardinal doctrines, the Fall of man, Juſtification by faith, and of the atonement made by the death of Chriſt, and of his righteouſneſs tranſferred to them, they can have no benefit from his death. I dare in no wiſe affirm this. Indeed I do not believe it. I believe the merciful God regards the lives and tempers of men more than their ideas. I believe he reſpects the goodneſs of the heart, rather than the clearneſs of the head: and that if the heart of a man be filled (by the grace of God, and the power of his Spirit) with the humble, gentle, patient love of God and man, God will not caſt him into everlaſting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels, becauſe his ideas are not clear, or becauſe

his conceptions are confuſed: without holineſs, I own, no man ſhall ſee the Lord: but I dare not add, or clear ideas.

16. But to return to the text. Let me intreat all of you who are ſtill "without God in the world," to conſider with all your humanity, benevolence, virtue, you are ſtill

"Incluſi tenebris, & carcere cæco."

Incloſed in darkneſs and infernal ſhade.

My dear friends, you do not ſee God. You do not ſee the Sun of righteouſneſs. You have no fellowſhip with the Father, or with his Son Jeſus Chriſt. You never heard the voice that raiſeth the dead. Ye know not the voice of your Shepherd. Ye have not received the Holy Ghoſt. Ye have no ſpiritual ſenſes. You have your old natural ideas, paſſions, joys and fears: you are not new creatures. O cry to God, that he may rend the veil which is ſtill upon your hearts! and which gives you occaſion to complain,

"O dark, dark, dark! I ſtill muſt ſay,
Amidſt the blaze of goſpel day!"

O that you may this day hear his voice, who ſpeaketh as never man ſpake, ſaying, "Ariſe, ſhine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is riſen upon thee!" Is it not *his* voice that crieth aloud, "Look unto me, and be thou ſaved!" He ſaith, "Lo! I come!" "Even ſo, Lord Jeſus! Come quickly!"

Rotherham, July 6, 1790.

SERMON

SERMON CXXV.

ON THE INCREASE OF RICHES.

PSALM lxii, 10.

If riches increase, set not thine heart upon them.

1. FROM that express declaration of our Lord, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven," we may easily learn, that none can *have* riches, without being greatly endangered by them. But if the danger of barely having them is so great, how much greater is the danger of *increasing* them? This danger is great even to those who receive what is transmitted to them by their forefathers; but it is abundantly greater to those who acquire them by their skill and industry. Therefore nothing can be more prudent than this caution, "If riches increase, set not thine heart upon them."

2. It is true, riches and the increase of them, are the gift of God. Yet great care is to be taken,

taken, that what is intended for a bleſſing, does not turn into a curſe. To prevent which, it is highly expedient to conſider ſeriouſly, Firſt, What is meant by *riches*, and when they may be ſaid to *increaſe*. Secondly, What is implied in *ſetting our hearts upon them*, and how we may avoid it.

I. 1. Conſider firſt, What is here meant by *riches*. Indeed ſome may imagine, that it is hardly poſſible to miſtake the meaning of this common word. Yet in truth, there are thouſands in this miſtake; and many of them quite innocently. A perſon of note hearing a ſermon preached upon this ſubject ſeveral years ſince, between ſurprize and indignation broke out aloud, "Why does he talk about riches here? There is no rich man at *Whitehaven* but Sir James L." And it is true, there was none but he that had forty thouſand pounds a year, and ſome millions in ready money. But a man may be rich that has not a hundred a year, nor even one thouſand pounds in caſh. Whoſoever has food to eat and raiment to put on, with ſomething over, is rich. Whoever has the neceſſaries and conveniences of life for himſelf and his family, and a little to ſpare for them that have not, is properly a rich man. Unleſs he is miſer, a lover of money, one that hoards up what he can, and ought to give to the poor. For if ſo, he is a poor man ſtill, though he has millions in the bank: yea, he is the pooreſt of men; for

"The beggars but a common lot deplore:
The rich poor man's emphatically poor."

2. But here an exception may be made. A perſon may have more than neceſſaries and conveniencies

veniences for his family, and yet not be rich. For he may be in debt; and his debts may amount to more than he is worth. But if this be the caſe, he is not a rich man, how much money ſoever he has in his hands. Yea, a man of buſineſs may be afraid, that this is the real condition of his affairs, whether it be or no: And then he cannot be ſo charitable as he would, for fear of being unjuſt. How many that are engaged in trade, are in this very condition? Thoſe eſpecially that trade to a very large amount? For their affairs are frequently ſo entangled, that it is not poſſible to determine with any exactneſs how much they are worth, or indeed whether they are worth any thing or nothing. Should we not make a fair allowance for them?

3. And beware of forming a haſty judgment concerning the fortune of others. There may be ſecrets in the ſituation of a perſon, which few but God are acquainted with. Some years ſince, I told a gentleman, "Sir, I am afraid you are covetous." He aſked me, What is the reaſon of your fear? I anſwered, "A year ago, when I made a collection for the expence of repairing the Foundery, you ſubſcribed five guineas. At the ſubſcription made this year, you ſubſcribed only half a guinea." He made no reply; but after a time aſked, "Pray, Sir, anſwer me a queſtion. Why do you live upon potatoes?" (I did ſo between three and four years.) I replied, "It has much conduced to my health." He anſwered, "I believe it has. But did you not do it likewiſe to ſave money?" I ſaid, "I did, for what I ſave from my own *meat*, will feed another that elſe would have none." "But Sir," ſaid he, "if this be your motive, you may ſave much more. I know

I know a man that goes to the market, at the beginning of every week. There he buys a pennyworth of parſnips, which he boils in a large quantity of water. The parſnips ſerve him for food, and the water for drink the enſuing week. So his meat and drink together coſt him only a penny a week." This he conſtantly did, though he had then two hundred pounds a year; to pay the debts which he had contracted, before he knew God!—And this was he, whom I had ſet down for a covetous man!

4. But there are thoſe who are conſcious before God that they are rich. And doubtleſs ſome among *you* are of the number. You have more of the goods of this world than is needful either for yourſelf or your family. Let each conſider for himſelf. Do *your* riches increaſe? Do not you underſtand that plain expreſſion? Have you not more money or more of money's worth, than you had ten or twenty years ago? Or at this time laſt year? If you keep any account, you can eaſily know this. Indeed you ought to know; otherwiſe you are not a good ſteward, even in this reſpect, of the mammon of unrighteouſneſs. And every man whether engaged in trade or not, ought to know, whether his ſubſtance leſſens or increaſes.

5. But many have found out a way never to be rich, though their ſubſtance increaſe ever ſo much. It is this. As faſt as ever money comes in, they lay it out, either in land or enlarging their buſineſs. By this means each of theſe, keeping himſelf bare of money, can ſtill ſay, "I am not rich." Yea, though he has ten, twenty, a hundred times more ſubſtance, than he had ſome years ago. This may be explained by a recent

recent case. A Gentleman came to a merchant in *London* a few years since, and told him, "Sir, I beg you will give me a guinea, for a worthy family in great distress." He replied, "Really Mr. *M.* I cannot well afford to give you it just now. But if you will call upon me when I am worth ten thousand pounds, upon such an occasion, I will give you ten guineas." Mr. *M.* after some time called upon him again, and said, "Sir, I claim your promise, now you are worth ten thousand pounds." He replied, "That is very true. But I assure you, I cannot spare one guinea so well as I could then."

6. It is possible, for a man to cheat himself, by this ingenious device. And he may cheat other men: for as long "as thou doest good unto thyself, men will speak well of thee." "A right *good man*, says the *Londoner*: he is worth a plumb: a hundred thousand pounds." But alas! he cannot deceive the devil. Ah no! The curse of God is upon thee already, and all that thou hast. And to morrow, when the devil seizes thy soul, will he not say, "What do all thy riches profit thee? Will they purchase a pillow for thy head, in the lake of fire burning with brimstone? Or will they procure thee a cup of water to cool thy tongue, while thou art tormented in that flame?" O follow the wise direction here given, that God may not say unto thee, "Thou fool."

7. This shift therefore will not avail. It will not be any protection, either against the wrath of God, or the malice and power of the devil. Thou art convicted already of *setting thy heart* upon thy riches, if thou layest all thou hast, above the conveniencies of life, on adding money to money, house to house, or field to field, without giving

at

at leaſt a tenth of thine income (the *Jewiſh* proportion) to the poor. By whatſoever means thy riches increaſe, whether with or without labour; whether by trade, legacies, or any other way, unleſs thy charities increaſe in the ſame proportion, unleſs thou giveſt a full tenth of thy ſubſtance, of thy fixt and occaſional income, thou doſt undoubtedly ſet thy heart upon thy gold, and it will *eat thy fleſh as fire.*

8. But O! who can convince a rich man that he ſets his heart upon riches? For conſiderably above half a century I have ſpoken on this head, with all the plainneſs that was in my power. But with how little effect! I doubt whether I have in all that time convinced fifty miſers of covetouſneſs. When the lover of money was deſcribed ever ſo clearly, and painted in the ſtrongeſt colours, who applied it to himſelf? To whom did God and all that knew him ſay, *Thou art the man?* If he ſpeaks to any of you that are preſent, O do not ſtop your ears! Rather ſay with *Zaccheus*, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor: And if I have done any wrong to any man, I reſtore fourfold!" He did not mean that he had done this in time paſt; but that he determined to do ſo for the time to come. I charge thee before God, thou lover of money, to *go and do likewiſe!*

9. I have a meſſage from God unto thee, O rich man, whether thou wilt hear, or whether thou wilt forbear. Riches have increaſed with thee: at the peril of thy ſoul, "ſet not thine heart upon them." Be thankful to Him that gave thee ſuch a talent, ſo much power of doing good. Yet dare not to rejoice over them, but with fear and trembling. *Cave ne inhereas* ſays pious

pious *Kempis*, *ne capiaris & pereas*. Beware thou cleave not unto them, leſt thou be entangled and periſh. Do not make them thy end, thy chief delight; thy happineſs, thy God! See that thou expect not happineſs in money, nor any thing that is purchaſable thereby: in gratifying either the deſire of the fleſh, the deſire of the eyes, or the pride of life.

10. But let us deſcend to particulars: And ſee that each of you deal faithfully with his own ſoul. If any of you have now twice, thrice, or four times as much ſubſtance as when you firſt ſaw my face, faithfully examine yourſelves, and ſee if you do not ſet your hearts, if not directly on money or riches themſelves, yet on ſome of the things that are purchaſable thereby, which comes to the ſame thing. All thoſe the Apoſtle *John* includes under that general name, *the world*: and the deſire of them, or to ſeek happineſs in them, under that form, "the love of the world." This he divides into three branches, "The deſire of the fleſh, the deſire of the eyes, and the pride of life." Fairly examine yourſelves with regard to theſe. And firſt, as to "the deſire of the fleſh." I believe this means the ſeeking of happineſs in the things that gratify the ſenſes. To inſtance in one, Do not you ſeek your happineſs in enlarging the pleaſure of *feeding*? To be more particular, Do you not *eat* more plentifully or more delicately than you did ten or twenty years ago? Do not you uſe more *drink*, or drink of a more *coſtly* kind, than you did then? Do you ſleep on as hard a bed as you did once, ſuppoſe your health will bear it? To touch on one point more; Do you *faſt* as often now you are rich, as you did when you was poor? Ought you not in

all reaſon to do this, rather more often than more ſeldom? I am afraid, your own heart condemns you. You are not clear in this matter.

11. The ſecond branch of the love of the world, "the deſire of the eyes," is of a wider extent. We may underſtand thereby, The ſeeking our happineſs in gratifying the imagination, (which is chiefly done by means of the eyes) by grand, or new, or beautiful objects. If they may not all be reduced to one head: Since neither grand, nor beautiful objects are pleaſing, when the novelty of them is gone. But are not the veriеſt trifles pleaſing as long as they are new? Do not ſome of you on the ſcore of novelty, ſeek no ſmall part of your happineſs in that trifle of trifles, dreſs? Do not you beſtow more money, or (which is the ſame) more time or pains upon it, than you did once? I doubt this is not done to pleaſe God. Then it pleaſes the devil. If you laid aſide your needleſs ornaments ſome years ſince, ruffles, necklaces, ſpider-caps, ugly, unbecoming bonnets, coſtly linen, expenſive laces, have you not, in defiance of religion and reaſon, taken to them again?

12. Perhaps you ſay, "You can now *afford* the expence." This is the quinteſſence of nonſenſe. Who gave you this addition to your fortune? Or (to ſpeak properly) *lent* it to you? To ſpeak more properly ſtill, Who lodged it for a time in your hands as his *ſteward?* Informing you at the ſame time, for *what* purpoſes he intruſted you with it? And can you *afford* to waſte your Lord's goods, for every part of which you are to give an account? Or to expend them in any other way than that which he hath expreſsly appointed?

appointed? Away with this vile, diabolical cant! Let it never more come out of your lips. This *affording* to rob God, is the very cant of hell. Do not you know, that God *intrufted* you with that money (all above what buys neceſſaries for your families) to feed the hungry, to clothe the naked, to help the ſtranger, the widow, the fatherleſs; and indeed as far as it will go, to relieve the wants of all mankind? How can you, how dare you defraud your Lord, by applying it to any other purpoſe? When he intruſted you with a little, did he not intruſt you with it that you might lay out all that little in doing good? And when he intruſted you with more, did he not intruſt you with that additional money that you might do ſo much the more good, as you had more ability? Had you any more right to waſte a pound, a ſhilling, or a penny, than you had before? You have, therefore, no more right to gratify the deſire of the fleſh, or the deſire of the eyes now, than when you was a beggar. O no! Do not make ſo poor a return to your beneficent Lord! Rather the more he entruſts you with, be ſo much the more careful to employ every mite as he hath appointed.

13. Ye angels of God, ye ſervants of his, that continually do his pleaſure; our common Lord hath intruſted you alſo with talents, far more precious than gold and ſilver, that you may miniſter in your various offices to the heirs of ſalvation. Do not you employ every mite of what you have received, to the end for which it was given you? And hath he not directed us, to do his will on earth, *as it is done* by you *in heaven?* Brethren, what are we doing? Let us awake! Let us ariſe! Let us imitate thoſe

flaming miniſters! Let us employ our whole ſoul, body and ſubſtance, according to the will of our Lord. Let us render unto God the things that are God's, even all we are and all we have!

14. Moſt of thoſe, who when riches increaſe ſet their hearts upon them, do it indirectly, in ſome of the preceding inſtances. But there are others who do this more directly, being properly *lovers of money*; who love it for its own ſake, not only for the ſake of what it procures. But this vice is very rarely found in children or young perſons; but only or chiefly in the old; in thoſe that have the leaſt need of money, and the leaſt time to enjoy it. Might not this induce one to think, that in many caſes it is a penal evil? That it is a ſin-puniſhing evil? That when a man has for many years hid his precious talent in the earth, God delivers him up to ſatan, to puniſh by the inordinate love of it? Then it is that he is more and more tormented by that *auri ſacra fames!* That execrable hunger after gold, which can never be ſatisfied! No. It is moſt true, as the very heathen obſerves:—*Creſcit amor nummi, quantum ipſa pecunia creſcit.*—As money, ſo the love of money grows: It increaſes in the ſame proportion. As in a dropſy, the more you drink, the more you thirſt; till that unquenchable thirſt plunge you into the fire, which never ſhall be quenched.

15. But is there no way, you may aſk, either to prevent or to cure this dire diſeaſe? There is one preventative of it, which is alſo a remedy for it: and I believe there is no other under heaven. It is this. After you have *gained* (with the cautions above given) *all you can*, and *ſaved all*

all you can, wanting for nothing: Spend not one pound, one shilling, or one penny, to gratify either the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eyes, or the pride of life; or indeed, for any other end than to please and glorify God. Having avoided this rock on the right hand, beware of that on the left. Secondly, *hoard nothing*. Lay up no treasure on earth, but *give all you can*, that is, all you have. I defy all the men upon earth, yea, all the angels in heaven, to find any other way of extracting the poison from riches.

16. Let me add one word more. After having served you between sixty and seventy years; with dim eyes, shaking hands, and tottering feet, I give you one more advice before I sink into the dust. Mark those words of St. *Paul*. *Those that desire* or endeavour *to be rich*, that moment *fall into temptation*, yea a deep gulph of temptation, out of which nothing less than Almighty Power can deliver them. *They fall into a snare:* the word properly means a *steel trap*, which instantly crushes the animal taken to pieces: "and into divers foolish and hurtful desires, which plunge men into destruction and perdition." You, above all men, who now prosper in the world, never forget these awful words! How unspeakably slippery is your path! How dangerous every step! The Lord God enable you to see your danger, and make you deeply sensible of it. O may you "awake up after his likeness and be satisfied with it!"

17. Permit me to come a little closer still. Perhaps I may not trouble you any more on this head. I am pained for you that are *rich in this world*. Do you give all you can? You who receive five hundred pounds a year, and spend only

two hundred, do you give three hundred back to God? If not, you certainly rob God of that three hundred. You that receive two hundred, and spend but one, do you give God the other hundred? If not, you rob him of just so much. "Nay, may I not do what I will with *my own?*" Here lies the ground of your mistake. It is not your *own*. It cannot be, unless you are Lord of heaven and earth. "However I must provide for my children." Certainly. But how? By making them rich? Then you will probably make them heathens, as some of you have done already. "What shall I do then?" Lord, speak to their hearts! Else the Preacher speaks in vain. Leave them enough to live on, not in idleness and luxury, but by honest industry. And if you have not children, upon what scriptural or rational principle, can you leave a groat behind you, more than will bury you? I pray consider: What are you the better for what you leave behind? What does it signify; whether you leave behind you ten thousand pounds, or ten thousand shoes and boots? O! leave nothing behind you! Send all you have before you into a better world! Lend it, lend it all unto the Lord, and it shall be paid you again! Is there any danger that *his* truth should fail? It is fixt as the pillars of heaven. Haste, Haste, my Brethren, haste! lest you be called away, before you have settled what you have on this security! When this is done, you may boldly say, "Now I have nothing to do but to die! Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit! Come Lord Jesus. Come quickly."

Bristol, Sept. 21, 1790.

SERMON

SERMON CXXVI.

ON THE DEATH OF THE REV. GEORGE WHITFIELD.

NUMBERS xxiii. 10.

Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!

1. LET *my last end be like his!* How many of you join in this wish? Perhaps there are few of you who do not, even in this numerous congregation. And O that this wish may rest upon your minds! That it may not die away, till your souls also are lodged "where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest!"

2. An elaborate exposition of the text, will not be expected on this occasion. It would detain you too long from the sadly-pleasing thought of your beloved brother, friend, and pastor; yea, and father too: for how many are here whom he hath *begotten in the Lord?* Will it not then be more

more suitable to your inclinations as well as to this solemnity, directly to speak of this man of God, whom you have so often heard speaking in this place? *The end of whose conversation* ye know, *Jesus Christ the same yesterday, to day and for ever.*

And may we not,

First, Observe a few particulars of his life and death.

Secondly, Take some view of his character. And,

Thirdly, Inquire how we may improve this awful providence, his sudden removal from us.

I. 1. We may, in the first place, observe a few particulars of his life and death. He was born at *Gloucester*, in *December*, 1714, and put to a grammar-school there when about twelve years old. When he was seventeen he began to be seriously religious, and served God to the best of his knowledge. About eighteen he removed to the university, and was admitted at *Pembroke* College in *Oxford*. And about a year after, he became acquainted with the *Methodists*, (so called) whom from that time he loved as his own soul.

2. By them he was convinced, that we *must be born again*, or outward religion will profit us nothing. He joined with them in fasting on *Wednesdays* and *Fridays*, in visiting the sick and the prisoners, and in gathering up the very fragments of time, that no moment might be lost. And he changed the course of his studies, reading chiefly such books as entered into the heart of religion, and led directly to an experimental knowledge of Jesus Christ, and him crucified.

3. He

3. He was soon tried as with fire. Not only his reputation was lost, and some of his dearest friends forsook him: but he was exercised with inward trials and those of the severest kind. Many nights he lay sleepless upon his bed: many days prostrate on the ground. But after he had groaned several months under *the Spirit of bondage*, God was pleased to remove the heavy load, by giving him the *Spirit of adoption*, enabling him, through a living faith, to lay hold on *the Son of his love*.

4. However, it was thought needful, for the recovery of his health, which was much impaired, that he should go into the country. He accordingly went to *Gloucester*, where God enabled him to awaken several young persons. These soon formed themselves into a little society, and were some of the first fruits of his labour. Shortly after he began to read twice or thrice a week to some poor people in the town, and every day to read to, and pray with the prisoners in the county goal.

5. Being now about twenty-one years of age, he was solicited to enter into holy orders. Of this he was greatly afraid, being deeply sensible of his own insufficiency. But the bishop himself sending for him, and telling him, "Though I had purposed to ordain none under three and twenty, yet I will ordain *you* whenever you come;" and several other providential circumstances concuring, he submitted, and was ordained on *Trinity-Sunday*, 1736. The next *Sunday* he preached to a crouded auditory, in the church wherein he was baptised. The week following he returned to *Oxford*, and took his Bachelor's degree. And he was now fully employed, the

care

care of the prisoners and the poor lying chiefly on him.

6. But it was not long before he was invited to *London*, to serve the cure of a friend going into the country. He continued there two months, lodging in the *Tower*, reading prayers in the chapel twice a week, catechizing and preaching once, beside daily visiting the soldiers in the barracks and the infirmary. He also read prayers every evening at *Wapping*-chapel, and preached at *Ludgate*-prison every *Tuesday*. While he was here, letters came from his friends in *Georgia*, which made him long to go and help them. But not seeing his call clear, at the appointed time he returned to his little charge at *Oxford*; where several youths met him daily at his room, to *build up each other in their most holy faith*.

7. But he was quickly called from hence again to supply the cure of *Dummer* in *Hampshire*. Here he read prayers twice a day, early in the morning, and in the evening, after the people came from work. He also daily catechised the children and visited from house to house. He now divided the day into three parts, alloting eight hours for sleep and meals, eight for study and retirement, and eight for reading prayers, catechizing, and visiting the people. —Is there a more excellent way for a servant of Christ and his church? If not, Who will *go and do likewise?*

8. Yet his mind still ran on going abroad. And being now fully convinced he was called of God thereto, he set all things in order, and in *January* 1737, went down to take leave of his friends in *Gloucester*. It was in this journey that God began to bless his ministry in an uncommon manner.

manner. Wherever he preached, amazing multitudes of hearers flocked together, in *Glocester*, in *Stonehouse*, in *Bath*, in *Briſtol*: ſo that the heat of the churches was ſcarce ſupportable. And the impreſſions made on the minds of many, were no leſs extraordinary. After his return to *London*, while he was detained by General *Oglethorpe*, from week to week and from month to month, it pleaſed God to bleſs his word ſtill more. And he was indefatigable in his labour: generally on *Sunday* he preached four times, to exceeding large auditories; beſide reading prayers twice or thrice, and walking to and fro, often ten or twelve miles.

9. On *December* 28, he left *London*. It was on the 29th that he firſt preached without notes. *December* 30, he went on board; but it was above a month before they cleared the land. One happy effect of their very ſlow paſſage, he mentions in *April* following: "Bleſſed be God, we now live very comfortably in the great cabbin. We talk of little elſe but God and Chriſt: and ſcarce a word is heard among us when together, but what has reference to our fall in the firſt, and our new birth in the ſecond *Adam*." It ſeems likewiſe to have been a peculiar providence, that he ſhould ſpend a little time at *Gibraltar*: where both citizens and ſoldiers, high and low, young and old, acknowledged the day of their viſitation.

10. From *Sunday*, *May* 7, 1738, till the latter end of *Auguſt* following, he *made full proof of his miniſtry* in *Georgia*, particularly at *Savannah*; he read prayers and expounded twice a day and viſited the ſick daily. On *Sunday* he expounded at five in the morning; at ten read prayers and preached, and

and at three in the afternoon: and at seven in the evening expounded the church catechism. How much easier is it for our brethren in the ministry, either in *England*, *Scotland*, or *Ireland*, to find fault with such a labourer in our Lord's vineyard, than to tread in his steps?

11. It was now that he observed the deplorable condition of many children here; and that God put into his heart the first thought of founding an *Orphan-house*: for which he determined to raise contributions in *England*, if God should give him a safe return thither. In *December* following he did return to *London*: and on *Sunday*, *January* the 14th, 1739, he was ordained priest at *Christ-Church*, *Oxford*. The next day he came to *London* again: and on *Sunday* the 21st preached twice. But though the churches were large, and crouded exceedingly, yet many hundreds stood in the church yard, and hundreds more returned home. This put him upon the first thought of preaching in the open air. But when he mentioned to some of his friends, they judged it to be mere madness. So he did not carry it into execution, till after he had left *London*. It was on *Wednesday*, *February* 21, that finding all the church doors to be shut in *Bristol*, (beside that no church was able to contain one half of the congregation) at three in the afternoon he went to *Kingswood*, and preached abroad to near two thousand people. On *Friday* he preached there to four or five thousand; and on *Sunday* to (it was supposed) ten thousand. The number continually increased all the time he stayed at *Bristol*. And a flame of holy love was kindled, which will not easily be put out. The same was afterwards kindled in various parts of *Wales*, of *Gloucestershire*,

terſhire, and *Worceſterſhire*. Indeed wherever he went, God abundantly confirmed the word of his meſſenger.

12. On Sunday, April 29, he preached the firſt time in Moorfields, and on Kennington-common. And the thouſands of hearers were as quiet as they could have been in a church. Being again detained in England from month to month, he made little excurſions into ſeveral counties, and received the contributions of willing multitudes, for an Orphan-houſe in Georgia. The embargo which was now laid on the ſhipping, gave him leiſure for more journies, through various parts of England, for which many will have reaſon to bleſs God to all eternity. At length, on Auguſt 14, he embarked. But he did not land in Penſylvania till October 30. Afterwards he went through Penſylvania, the Jerſeys, New-York, Maryland, Virginia, North and South Carolina, preaching all along to immenſe congregations, with fail as great effect as in England: on January 10, 1740, he arrived at Savannah.

13. January 29, he added three deſolate orphans to near twenty which he had in his houſe before. The next day he laid out the ground for the houſe, about ten miles from Savannah. February 11, he took in four orphans more, and ſet out for Frederica, in order to fetch orphans that were in the ſouthern parts of the colony. In his return he fixt a ſchool, both for children and grown perſons, at Darien, and took four orphans thence. March 25, he laid the firſt ſtone of the Orphan-houſe, to which, with great propriety, he gave the name of *Bethesda*: a work for which the children yet unborn ſhall praiſe the Lord. He had now about forty

orphans, ſo that there were near an hundred mouths to be fed daily. But he was *careful for nothing*, caſting his care on him who *feedeth the young ravens that call upon him.*

14. In April he made another tour through Penſylvania, the Jerſeys, and New-York. Incredible multitudes flocked to hear, among whom were abundance of negroes. In all places the greater part of the hearers were affected to an amazing degree. Many were deeply convinced of their loſt ſtate; many truly converted to God. In ſome places thouſands cried out aloud; many as in the agonies of death. Moſt were drowned in tears; ſome turned pale as death; others were wringing their hands; others lying on the ground; others ſinking into the arms of their friends; almoſt all lifting up their eyes, and calling for mercy.

15. He returned to Savannah, June 5. The next evening, during the public ſervice, the whole congregation young and old, were diſſolved in tears. After ſervice, ſeveral of the pariſhioners, and all his family, particularly the little children, returned home crying along the ſtreets, and ſome could not help praying aloud. The groans and cries of the children continued all night, and great part of the next day.

16. In Auguſt he ſet out again, and through various provinces came to Boſton. While he was here, and in the neighbouring places, he was extremely weak in body. Yet the multitudes of hearers were ſo great, and the effects wrought on them ſo aſtoniſhing, as the oldeſt men then alive in the town had never ſeen before. The ſame power attended his preaching at New-York; particularly on Sunday, November 2. Almoſt

as

as soon as he began, crying, weeping, and wailing, were to be heard on every side. Many sunk down to the ground, cut to the heart: and many were filled with divine consolation. Toward the close of his journey he made this reflection: "It is the seventy-fifth day since I arrived at Rhode-Island, exceeding weak in body. Yet God has enabled me to preach an hundred and seventy-five times in public, beside exhorting frequently in private. Never did God vouchsafe me greater comforts: never did I perform my journies with less fatigue, or see such a continuance of the divine presence in the congregations to whom I preached." In December he returned to Savannah, and in the March following arrived in England

17. You may easily observe, that the preceding account is chiefly extracted from his own journals, which, for their artless and unaffected simplicity, may vie with any writings of the kind. And how exact a specimen is this of his labours both in Europe and America, for the honour of his beloved Master, during the thirty years that followed! As well as of the uninterrupted shower of blessings wherewith God was pleased to succeed his labours! Is it not much to be lamented, that any thing should have prevented his continuing this account, till at least near the time when he was called by his Lord to enjoy the fruit of his labour? —If he has left any papers of this kind, and his friends account me worthy of the honour, it would be my glory and joy to methodize, transcribe, and prepare them for the public view.

18. A particular account of the last scene of his life is thus given by a gentleman of Boston: "After being about a month with us in Boston

and its vicinity, and preaching every day, he went to Old-York, preached on Thurſday, September 27, there: proceeded to Portſmouth, and preached there on Friday. On Saturday morning he ſet out for Boſton: but before he came to Newbury, where he had engaged to preach the next morning, he was importuned to preach by the way. The houſe not being large enough to contain the people, he preached in an open field. But having been infirm for ſeveral weeks, this ſo exhauſted his ſtrength, that when he came to Newbury, he could not get out of the ferry-boat without the help of two men. In the evening, however, he recovered his ſpirits, and appeared with his uſual chearfulneſs. He went to his chamber at nine, his firſt time, which no company could divert him from: and ſlept better than he had done for ſome weeks before. He roſe at four in the morning, September 30, and went into his cloſet; and his companion obſerved he was unuſually long in private. He left his cloſet, returned to his companion, threw himſelf on the bed, and lay about ten minutes. Then he fell upon his knees, and prayed moſt fervently to God, "That if it was conſiſtent with his will, he might that day finiſh his Maſter's work." He then deſired his man to call Mr. Parſons, the clergyman, at whoſe houſe he was: but in a minute, before Mr. Parſons could reach him, he died, without a ſigh or a groan. On the news of his death, ſix gentlemen ſet out for Newbury in order bring his remains hither, but he could not be moved, ſo that his precious aſhes muſt remain at Newbury. Hundreds would have gone from this town to attend his funeral, had they not expected he would have been interred here.—

here.—May this ſtroke be ſanctified to the church of God in general, and to this province in particular!"

II. 1. We are in the ſecond place, to take ſome view of his character. A little ſketch of this was, ſoon after, publiſhed in the Boſton Gazette: an extract of which is ſubjoined: "In his public labours he has for many years aſtoniſhed the world with his eloquence and devotion. With what divine pathos did he perſuade the impenitent ſinner to embrace the practice of piety and virtue! He ſpoke from the heart, and with a fervency of zeal, perhaps unequalled ſince the days of the apoſtles. From the pulpit he was unrivalled in the command of an ever-crowded auditory. Nor was he leſs agreeable and inſtructive in his private converſation: happy in a remarkable eaſe of addreſs, willing to communicate, ſtudious to edify. May the riſing generation catch a ſpark of that flame which ſhone with ſuch diſtinguiſhed luſtre in the ſpirit and practice of this faithful ſervant of the moſt high God!"

2. A more particular, and equally juſt character of him, has appeared in one of the Engliſh papers. It may not be diſagreeable to you, to add the ſubſtance of this likewiſe: "The character of this truly pious perſon, muſt be impreſt on the heart of every friend to vital religion. In ſpite of a tender conſtitution, he continued, to the laſt day of his life, preaching with a frequency and a fervor, that ſeemed to exceed the natural ſtrength of the moſt robuſt. Being called to the exerciſe of his function at an age, when moſt young men are only beginning to qualify themſelves for it, he had not time to make a very conſiderable pro-

greſs in the learned languages. But this defect was amply ſupplied, by a lively and fertile genius, by fervent zeal, and by a forcible and moſt perſuaſive delivery. And though in the pulpit he often found it needful, by *the terrors of the Lord to perſuade men*, he had nothing gloomy in his nature, being ſingularly chearful, as well as charitable and tender-hearted. He was as ready to relieve the bodily as the ſpiritual neceſſities of thoſe that applied to him. It ought alſo to be obſerved, that he conſtantly enforced upon his audience every moral duty, particularly induſtry in their ſeveral callings, and obedience to their ſuperiors. He endeavoured, by the moſt extraordinary efforts, of preaching in different places, and even in the open fields, to rouſe the lower claſs of people, from the laſt degree of inattention and ignorance, to a ſenſe of religion. For this, and his other labours, the name of *George Whitfield*, will long be remembered with eſteem and veneration."

3. That both theſe accounts are juſt and impartial, will readily be allowed; that is, as far as they go. But they go little farther than the *outſide* of his character. They ſhew you the *preacher*, but not the *man*, the *Chriſtian*, the *ſaint* of God. May I be permitted to add a little on this head, from a perſonal knowledge of near forty years? Indeed, I am thoroughly ſenſible how difficult it is to ſpeak on ſo delicate a ſubject; what prudence is required to avoid both extremes, to ſay neither too little, nor too much? Nay, I know it is impoſſible to ſpeak to all, to ſay either leſs or more, without incurring from ſome the former, from others the latter cenſure. Some will ſeriouſly think, that too little is ſaid; and others, that

that it is too much. But without attending to this, I will ſpeak juſt what I know, before him to whom we are all to give an account.

4. Mention has already been made of his unparalleled *zeal*, his indefatigable *activity*, his *tender-heartedneſs* to the afflicted, and *charitableneſs* toward the poor. But ſhould we not likewiſe mention his deep *gratitude*, to all whom God had uſed as inſtruments of good to him? Of whom he did not ceaſe to ſpeak in the moſt reſpectful manner, even to his dying day. Should we not mention, that he had an heart ſuſceptible of the moſt generous and moſt tender *friendſhip*? I have frequently thought, that this, of all others, was the diſtinguiſhing part of his character. How few have we known of ſo kind a temper, of ſuch large and flowing affections? Was it not principally by this, that the hearts of others were ſo ſtrangely drawn and knit to him? Can any thing but love beget love? This ſhone in his very countenance, and continually breathed in all his words, whether in public or private. Was it not this, which, quick and penetrating as lightning, flew from heart to heart? Which gave that life to his ſermons, his converſations, his letters? Ye are witneſſes.

5. But away with the vile miſconſtruction of men of corrupt minds, who know of no love but what is *earthly and ſenſual*. Be it remembered, at the ſame time, that he was endued with the moſt nice and unblemiſhed *modeſty*. His office called him to converſe very frequently and largely, with women as well as men; and thoſe of every age and condition. But his whole behaviour toward them, was a practical comment on that advice of St. *Paul* to *Timothy*, "Intreat the elder women

women as mothers, the younger as ſiſters, with all purity."

6. Mean time, how ſuitable to the friendlineſs of his ſpirit, was the *frankneſs* and *openneſs* of his converſation? Although it was as far removed from rudeneſs on the one hand, as from guile and diſguiſe on the other. Was not this frankneſs at once a fruit and a proof of his *courage* and *intrepidity?* Armed with theſe, he feared not the faces of men, but *uſed great plainneſs of ſpeech* to perſons of every rank and condition, high and low, rich and poor: endeavouring only *by manifeſtation of the truth*, to *commend himſelf to every man's conſcience in the ſight of God.*

7. Neither was he afraid of labour or pain, any more than "what man could do unto him," being equally

"Patient in bearing ill and doing well."

And this appeared in the *ſteadineſs* wherewith he purſued whatever he undertook for his Maſter's ſake. Witneſs one inſtance for all, the Orphan-houſe in Georgia, which he began and perfected, in ſpite of all diſcouragements. Indeed, in whatever concerned himſelf, he was pliant and flexible. In this caſe he was "eaſy to be intreated," eaſy to be either convinced or perſuaded. But he was immoveable in the things of God, or wherever his conſcience was concerned. None could perſuade, any more than affright him, to vary in the leaſt point from that *integrity*, which was inſeparable from his whole character, and regulated all his words and actions. Herein he did

"Stand

"Stand as an iron pillar ſtrong,
And ſtedfaſt as a wall of braſs."

8. If it be inquired, What was the foundation of his integrity, or of his ſincerity, courage, patience, and every other valuable and amiable quality, it is eaſy to give the anſwer. It was not the excellence of his natural temper: not the ſtrength of his underſtanding: it was not the force of education; no, nor the advice of his friends. It was no other than faith in a bleeding Lord; "Faith of the operation of God." It was "a lively hope of an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and that fadeth not away." It was "the love of God ſhed abroad in his heart by the Holy Ghoſt, which was given unto him," filling his ſoul with tender, diſintereſted love to every child of man. From this ſource aroſe that torrent of *eloquence* which frequently bore down all before it: from this, that aſtoniſhing force of *perſuaſion*, which the moſt hardened ſinners could not reſiſt.——This it was, which often made his *head as waters*, and his *eyes a fountain of tears*. This it was, which enabled him to pour out his ſoul in *prayer*, in a manner peculiar to himſelf, with ſuch fulneſs and eaſe united together, with ſuch ſtrength and variety both of ſentiment and expreſſion.

9. I may cloſe this head with obſerving, What an honour it pleaſed God to put upon his faithful ſervant, by allowing him to declare his everlaſting goſpel in ſo many various countries, to ſuch numbers of people, and with ſo great an effect on ſo many of their precious ſouls! Have we read or heard of any perſon ſince the apoſtles, who teſtified the goſpel of the grace of God, through

through so widely extended a space, through so large a part of the habitable world? Have we read or heard of any person who called so many thousands, so many myriads of sinners to repentance? Above all, have we read or heard of any, who has been so blessed an instrument in his hand of *bringing* so many sinners from *darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God?* It is true, were we to talk thus to the gay world, we should be judged to *speak as barbarians*. But *you* understand the language of the country to which you are going, and whither our dear friend is gone a little before us.

III. But how shall we improve this awful providence? This is the *third* thing which we have to consider. And the answer to this important question is easy: (may God write it in all our hearts!) By keeping close to the *grand doctrines* which he delivered: and by drinking into his *Spirit*.

1. And first, let us keep close to the grand scriptural doctrines, which he every where delivered. There are many doctrines of a less essential nature, with regard to which, even the sincere children of God (such is the present weakness of human understanding!) are and have been divided for many ages. In these we may think and let think; we may "agree to disagree." But mean time let us hold fast the essentials of *the faith which was once delivered to the saints;* and which this champion of God so strongly insisted on, at all times, and in all places.

2. His fundamental point was, Give God all the glory of whatever is good in man. And in the business of salvation, Set Christ as high, and

man

man as low as poſſible. With this point, he and his friends at Oxford, the original *Methodiſts* (ſo called) ſet out. Their grand principle was, There is *no power* (by nature) and *no merit* in man. They inſiſted, all power to think, ſpeak, or act right, is in and from the Spirit of Chriſt: and all merit is (not in man, how high ſoever in grace, but merely) in the blood of Chriſt. So he and they taught: There is no power in man, till it is given him from above, to do one good work, to ſpeak one good word, or to form one good deſire. For it is not enough to ſay, all men are *ſick of ſin:* no, we are all dead *in treſpaſſes and ſins.* It follows, that all the children of men are *by nature children of wrath.* We are all *guilty before God*, liable to death temporal and eternal.

3. And we are all helpleſs, both with regard to the power and to the guilt of ſin. For "who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?" None leſs than the Almighty. Who can raiſe thoſe that are *dead*, ſpiritually dead in ſin? None but he who raiſed us from the duſt of the earth. But on what conſideration will he do this? "Not for works of righteouſneſs that we have done." "The dead cannot praiſe thee, O Lord!" Nor do any thing for the ſake of which they ſhould be raiſed to life. Whatever therefore God does, he does it merely for the ſake of his well beloved Son; "he was wounded for our tranſgreſſions, he was bruiſed for our iniquities." "He himſelf bore all our ſins in his own body upon the tree." "He was delivered for our offences, and roſe again for our juſtification." Here then is the ſole *meritorious cauſe* of every bleſſing we do or can enjoy: in particular of our pardon and acceptance with God, of our full and free

free juſtification. But by what means do we become intereſted in what Chriſt has done and ſuffered? "Not by works, leſt any man ſhould boaſt;" but by faith alone. "We conclude, (ſays the apoſtle) that a man is juſtified by faith, without the works of the law." And "to as many as *thus* receive him, giveth he power to become the ſons of God: even to thoſe that believe in his name, who are born, not of the will of man but of God."

4. And "except a man be thus born again, he cannot ſee the kingdom of God." But all who are thus *born of the Spirit*, have *the kingdom of God within* them. Chriſt ſets up his kingdom in their hearts; "Righteouſneſs, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghoſt." That "mind is in them, which was in Chriſt Jeſus," enabling them to "walk as Chriſt alſo walked." His indwelling Spirit makes them both holy in heart, and "holy in all manner of converſation." But ſtill, ſeeing all this is a free gift, through the righteouſneſs and blood of Chriſt, there is eternally the ſame reaſon to remember, "He that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord."

5. You are not ignorant, that theſe are the fundamental doctrines which he every where inſiſted on. And may they not be ſummed up, as it were, in two words, *The new birth*, and *juſtification by faith?* Theſe let us inſiſt upon with all boldneſs, at all times, and in all places: in public (thoſe of us who are called thereto) and at all opportunities, in private keep cloſe to theſe good, old, unfaſhionable doctrines, how many ſoever contradict and blaſpheme. Go on, my brethren, in the "name of the Lord, and in the power of his might." With all care and diligence,

"keep

"keep that safe which is committed to your trust:" knowing that "heaven and earth shall pass away; but *this truth* shall not pass away."

6. But will it be sufficient, "to keep close to his *doctrines*, how pure soever they are? Is there not a point of still greater importance than this, namely, to drink into his *Spirit?* Herein to *be a follower of* him, *even as* he was *of Christ?* Without this, the purity of our doctrines, would only increase our condemnation. This therefore is the principal thing, to copy after his spirit. And allowing that in some points, we must be content, to *admire* what we cannot *imitate:* yet in many others we may, through the same free grace, be partakers of the same blessing. Conscious then of your own wants, and of his bounteous love, who "giveth liberally and upbraideth not," cry to him that worketh all in all, for a measure of the same precious faith: of the same zeal and activity, the same tender-heartedness, charitableness, bowels of mercies. Wrestle with God for some degree of the same grateful, friendly, affectionate temper: of the same openness, simplicity, and godly sincerity. *Love without dissimulation.* Wrestle on, till the power from on high works in you the same steady courage and patience: and above all, because it is the crown of all, the same invariable integrity.

7. Is there any other fruit of the grace of God, with which he was eminently endowed, and the want of which among the children of God he frequently and passionately lamented? There is one, that is, *Catholic love:* that sincere and tender affection, which is due to all those, who, we have reason to believe, are children of God by faith: in other words, all those in every per-

ſuaſion, who "fear God and work righteouſneſs." He longed to ſee all who had *taſted of the good word*, of a truly *Catholic ſpirit*, (a word little underſtood, and ſtill leſs experienced by many, who have it frequently in their mouth.) Who is he that anſwers this character? Who is a man of a *Catholic ſpirit?* One who loves as friends, as brethren in the Lord, as joint-partakers of the preſent kingdom of heaven, and fellow-heirs of his eternal kingdom, all of whatever opinion, mode of worſhip, or congregation, who believe in the Lord Jeſus; who love God and man: who rejoicing to pleaſe, and fearing to offend God, are careful to abſtain from evil, and zealous of good works. He is a man of a truly Catholic ſpirit, who bears all theſe continually upon his heart: who having an unſpeakable tenderneſs for their perſons, and an earneſt deſire of their welfare, does not ceaſe to commend them to God in prayer, as well as to plead their cauſe before men: who ſpeaks comfortably to them, and labours by all his words, to ſtrengthen their hands in God. He aſſiſts them to the uttermoſt of his power, in all things, ſpiritual and temporal. He is ready "to ſpend and to be ſpent" for them; yea, "to lay down his life for *his* brethren."

8. How amiable a character is this? How deſirable to every child of God! But why is it then ſo rarely found? How is it, that there are ſo few inſtances of it? Indeed ſuppoſing we have taſted of the love of God, how can any of us reſt, till it is our own? Why, there is a delicate device, whereby Satan perſuades thouſands, that they may ſtop ſhort of it, and yet be guiltleſs. It is well, if many here preſent are not in this *ſnare of the devil, taken captive at his will.*

"O yes,

"O yes, says one, I have all this love for those I believe to be the children of God. But I will never believe, he is a child of God, who belongs to that *vile congregation!* Can he, do you think, be a child of God, who holds such *detestable opinions?* Or he that joins in such senseless and superstitious, if not idolatrous *worship?*" So we justify ourselves in one sin, by adding a second to it! We excuse the want of love in ourselves, by laying the blame on others. To colour our own devilish temper, we pronounce our brethren children of the devil. O beware of this! And if you are already taken in the snare, escape out of it as soon as possible. Go and learn that truly Catholic love, which *is not rash or hasty* in judging: that love which *thinketh no evil*, which *believeth and hopeth all things:* which makes all the allowances for others, that we desire others should make for us. Then we shall take knowledge of the grace of God, which is in every man, whatever be his opinion or mode of worship. Then will all that fear God be near and dear unto us, *in the bowels of Jesus Christ.*

9. Was not this the spirit of our dear friend? And why should it not be ours? O thou God of love, how long shall thy people be a bye-word among the Heathen? How long shall they laugh us to scorn, and say, "See how *these* Christians love one another?" When wilt thou roll away our reproach? "Shall the sword devour for ever? How long will it be, ere thou bid thy people return from following each other?" Now at least, *let all the people stand still, and pursue after* their brethren *no more!* But whatever others do, let all of us, my brethren, hear the voice of him that *being dead yet speaketh!* Suppose ye hear him say,

"Now

"Now, at leaſt, *ye followers of me as I was of Chriſt!* Let brother *no more lift up ſword* againſt brother, neither *know ye war any more!* Rather "put ye on, as the elect of God, bowels of mercies, humbleneſs of mind, brotherly kindneſs, gentleneſs, long-ſuffering, forbearing one another in love." Let the time paſt ſuffice for ſtrife, envy, contention; for *biting and devouring one another.* Bleſſed be God, that ye have not long ago been *conſumed one of another!* From henceforth hold ye *the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace!*

10. O God, with thee no word is impoſſible: thou doſt whatſoever pleaſeth thee! O that thou wouldeſt cauſe the mantle of thy prophet, whom thou haſt taken up, now to fall upon us that remain! *Where is the Lord God of Elijah? Let his Spirit reſt upon* theſe thy ſervants! Shew thou art the God that *anſwereſt by fire!* Let the fire of thy love fall on every heart! And becauſe we love thee, let us love one another with *a love ſtronger than death. Take away from us* all *anger, and wrath, and bitterneſs: all clamour and evil-ſpeaking.* Let thy Spirit ſo reſt upon us, that from this hour, we may be *kind to each other, tender-hearted: forgiving one another, even as God for Chriſt's ſake hath forgiven us!*

FINIS.